

Krajisnik refuses to sign allegiance

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Bosnian Serb leader Momcilo Krajisnik refused to sign an oath of allegiance to Bosnia Saturday in another snub to international efforts to get a Serb commitment to the new look unified post-war state. German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, who met the Serb hardliner in Sarajevo, said he was unable to secure Mr. Krajisnik's signature for the oath signed last weekend by the Muslim and Croat members of Bosnia's ruling presidency. "Unfortunately, we were not able to get the signature today but we will not give up. We cannot force Mr. Krajisnik to sign. To convince him is the only way," Mr. Kinkel told reporters. Signing a declaration of allegiance to the unity of Bosnia would be a significant step for the Bosnian Serb leader.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية / صحيفة يومية عربية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

French special envoy arrives in Cairo.

CAIRO (R) — A special envoy from French President Jacques Chirac began a Middle East tour in Cairo on Saturday and President Hosni Mubarak said again that he welcomed a European role in talks on Middle East peace. Envoy Bertrand Dufourcq, who is also secretary general of the foreign ministry, was to meet Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Saturday evening and Mr. Mubarak on Sunday, officials said. He will be in Israel on Monday and in the Palestinian territories on Tuesday, to prepare for Mr. Chirac's Middle East tour which starts next Saturday, they added. Mr. Chirac's tour comes at a time when Arab leaders are looking to Europe to balance the perceived pro-Israeli bias of U.S. President Bill Clinton, campaigning for reelection at a time of heightened tension in the region. The European Union has promised to appoint its own special envoy to Middle East peace talks, with a role similar to that of U.S. special coordinator Dennis Ross.

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Israel seeking sweeping changes to Hebron deal; Palestinians reject all

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials on Saturday outlined Israeli demands aimed at changing the substance of an accord on the West Bank town of Hebron signed more than a year ago with Israel's previous government.

The officials, participating in negotiations that began last week on implementing the accord that provides for an Israeli troop redeployment in the town, said they rejected all the demands, insisting the signed agreement be honoured unaltered.

The negotiations resume in force on Monday in the Egyptian resort town of Taba and will alternate between that venue and the nearby Israeli vacation spot of Eilat. On Saturday, low level discussions were to be held on civil affairs in Gaza.

The officials said changes Israel was seeking in the Hebron agreement were:

— Reducing the size of the Palestinian police force to be deployed in Hebron and changing the types of weapons it carries. Israel

Netanyahu says he now respects Arafat

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said for months he would meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat only if absolutely necessary, said in an interview published on Saturday that he now respected the man.

After taking office in June, Mr. Netanyahu waited 10 weeks before meeting Mr. Arafat for the first time on Sept. 4. They met again at the Middle East summit in Washington this month.

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wants the police armed only with pistols.

The September 1995 deal had said up to 400 Palestinian policemen armed with 200 pistols and 100 rifles would deploy in certain areas of Hebron.

— Israel insists on having the right to enter areas that were to come under Palestinian control in "hot pursuit" of Palestinians wanted by Israel.

— Adding a buffer zone between areas under Palestinian rule and those where Israeli soldiers remain to guard the 400 Jewish set-

tlers living amidst Hebron's 120,000 Palestinians.

— Israel wants to keep its soldiers on the high ground around Hebron's old city. Under the deal, that area was to come under Palestinian control. The settler enclaves are mainly in and near the old city.

— Israel does not want to transfer planning and zoning rights to Palestinians as it has done in other handovers.

— Israel is insisting it

(Continued on page 7)

'Leak' to New York Times did not come from Jordan — official

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Official sources yesterday confirmed as true an account published in the New York Times last week of what His Majesty King Hussein had told the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, during the Washington summit early this month.

According to the account, written by Thomas Friedman in his "Foreign Affairs" column of Oct. 19, the King delivered what was "the most important speech at the summit," expressing in it great disappointment with Mr. Netanyahu's lack of vision

and strategy for peace in the Middle East.

"The account of what His Majesty told Netanyahu is accurate," an official source said. "The only question over it, however, is who leaked it," said the source. "All I can tell you is that it wasn't us."

While it is unlikely that the Israelis would want to leak information about the tough talk which Mr. Netanyahu heard from the King, the sources believe that it was either the Americans or the Palestinians who made the account of the meeting public.

"We do not know the source from which Fried-

(Continued on page 7)

Parties, unions and others urge strong Arab position

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nineteen political parties, 13 professional unions and more than a dozen non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on Saturday issued a strong statement reaffirming the Arab and Muslim character of Jerusalem and the organic link between Jordan and Palestine and calling for an Arab summit to "build a joint Arab position to face the obstinate Israeli policies."

The signatories to the statement also called on Arab and Muslim countries that have signed agreements with Israel to "reconsider their relations (with the Jewish state) in light of Israel's policies towards the Palestinian people and Arab rights."

They also condemned the U.S. as the sponsor of the peace process, for its continued tilt towards Israel and against Arab rights.

Following is the full text

of the statement:

"The present crucial circumstances threaten the peace process with collapse resulting from Israel's intransigence and its persistence in Judaizing Jerusalem, endangering the Islamic and Christian holy places in the city, opening of tunnels under and around Al Aqsa Mosque, and continued killing and acts of barbaric measures against the Palestinians. The threat is posed to life of the Arab people and Israel disregards the Palestinian people's legitimate rights."

"Israel's false claim about its orientation towards peace has been exposed, as it maintains its occupation of Arab lands, and continues to expand Jewish settlements and obstructs the negotiations along the other Israeli-Arab tracks with full backing from the United States, relying on Arab countries' shortcomings

(Continued on page 7)

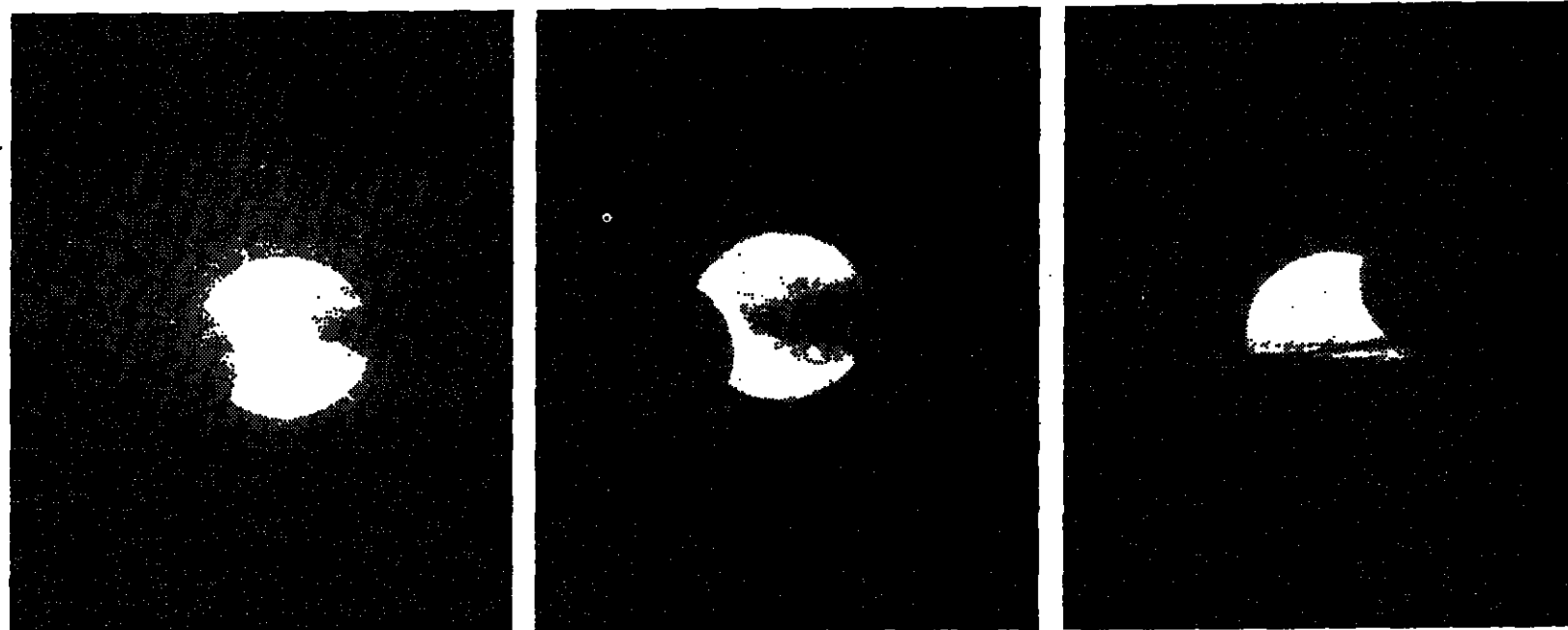
Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv receives threats

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv and Jordanian diplomats have been receiving threats. Ambassador Omar Rifai said Saturday. In a telephone interview with the Al Ra'i Arabic daily yesterday, the ambassador said the embassy last week received two telephone calls from anonymous callers claiming that bombs were planted in the embassy suite in Dan Hotel.

"In both cases, we immediately informed the Israeli authorities and we evacuated the building. Both cases were false alarms," Mr. Rifai said.

The ambassador said one of the diplomats at the embassy also received a threatening call. The caller, who spoke in Arabic, told

(Continued on page 7)



Three stages of the partial solar eclipse seen in Jordan on Saturday (Photo by Yousef Allan)

Partial solar eclipse seen from Western Europe to Canada

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan, along with other countries in the Middle East and Europe, witnessed a solar eclipse at 4.24 local time. An eclipse came in sharp and clear over Jordan.

Good weather conditions allowed spectators throughout Europe a clear view of the eclipse, the last to be visible across the continent until a total eclipse in 1999.

In Paris, the shadow of

the moon began to obscure the sun at 15:07, starting from the upper right quadrant, and covered about half the sphere with the eclipse at its fullest at 16:25 before disappearing across the upper left by 17:38.

The eclipse, which was caused by the moon being aligned with the earth and the sun, was visible across a vast swathe of the northern hemisphere, from the extreme north of Canada to

the Eastern Mediterranean.

Western Europe offered particularly good viewing with between 40 and over 70 per cent of the sun obscured for two-and-a-half hours depending on longitude. The more northerly the country the better the display, with some 76 per cent of the sun obscured in the far north of Norway.

In France, more than 200

observation sites were set up for spectators, many providing special protective glasses, essential to prevent damage to the retina.

Several hundred spectators in London's Hyde Park greeted the eclipse with shouts of enthusiasm as cloudy skies parted to allow, according to specialists, the best visibility since an eclipse in 1961.

Clear skies also allowed several hundred viewers to

follow the eclipse on the banks of the Danube in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, where a special telescope was erected. In Prague, the eclipse was briefly visible as cloudy skies cleared.

And in Italy, for those without protective glasses who still wanted to enjoy the show, the eclipse was relayed on the Internet.

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Olmert says it will be difficult to close new prayer hall at Aqsa

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem's hard-line Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, said Saturday it will be hard for Israel's government to prevent the opening of a new prayer hall in Al Aqsa Mosque compound.

Mr. Olmert said the previous, centre-left Labour government had allowed Muslims to pray there for the past year. The right-wing Likud government would be unwise to try to change the situation, he said.

"The government...will not be able to ignore the fact that the place has in effect been a Muslim house of prayer for the past year, with the concurrence of the government of Israel," he told Israeli army radio.

Tensions erupted last month when Israel opened a new exit to a tourist tunnel alongside the compound. The move set off three days of Palestinian-Israeli gun-battles that killed 79 people.

The latest dispute is over an ancient underground vault, popularly known as "Solomon's Stables."

For weeks, Palestinian

workers have been laying floor tiles and installing lighting to turn the chamber into a prayer hall to be called the Marwani Mosque. The hall will accommodate some 10,000 worshippers at one time, Channel 2 TV said.

Muslim clerics initially said the mosque would be opened Sunday, and said any move by Israel to stop them would result in a "massacre."

The Islamic Trust, which runs the Muslim holy sites, has since stepped back from confrontation.

Adnan Hussein, the Islamic Trust director, said Friday that no date had been set for the opening of the mosque. Once the work was completed, worship in the hall would begin, he said.

Two Jewish extremist groups have asked Israel's supreme court to order the work stopped and to block the opening of the mosque. The court rejected the Temple Mount Faithful's bid on Friday.

A hearing was scheduled for Sunday on a similar petition by Hai Vekayam.

Mubarak rejects Israeli complaint

SIXTH OF OCTOBER CITY (R) — President Hosni Mubarak, responding indirectly to Israeli complaints about Egyptian press attacks, asked the press on Saturday to eschew "base" comments but said he had no power to restrict its freedom.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy summoned Egyptian Ambassador Mohammad Bassiouny on Friday to protest at recent attacks on Israeli leaders in the Egyptian media.

Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon said he would not visit Egypt for energy talks until Cairo stopped attacking Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mr. Mubarak, opening a new printing press for the government newspaper Al Ahram in Sixth of October City outside Cairo, noted that no date had been set for Mr. Sharon's visit anyway.

"Whether he comes or

Bread price could be reduced in view of drop in world wheat prices

By Ghaila Alul Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The reduction of world grain prices could in the coming few weeks lead to a reduction in the prices of bread in the local market which underwent a significant hike last August in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF)-agreed economic reforms.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said Saturday. Dr. Muasher said the Kingdom was negotiating a purchase of 15,000 tonnes of U.S. grain. When the deal is concluded the prices of bread could go down, especially that the government did not set a minimum price for the bread, he said.

Dr. Muasher added that the government has set the maximum ceiling for bread prices at 250 fils per kilo, stressing that the prices will not exceed this figure no matter how high the prices on grain in the international market could get.

He said the purchase of wheat on the international market was open for the private sector which would

lead to a reduction of the prices of bread if grain prices go down.

Bread prices went up to 180 fils and 220 fils per kilo up from 85 fils two months ago.

The decision to raise the prices of bread has caused the worst riots in the Kingdom since 1989.

The government compensates every Jordanian for the price hikes through cash reimbursements of JD 1.28 per head.

Dr. Muasher said the government would continue to provide Jordanians with the compensation even if the prices go down.

Since the riots, Jordan has bought 14,000 tonnes of wheat at prices ranging from \$191-\$206 per tonne, a nearly 25 per cent drop from a high of \$275 per tonne last May.

Al Ra'i Arabic daily quoted Minister of Supply Munir Sobar as saying Saturday that the government would increase its wheat imports in the coming few weeks if the prices on the international market keep

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Netanyahu does not seem to have received Jordan's message yet

By Ayman Al Safadi Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The uncharacteristically strong language with which His Majesty King Hussein addressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during and after the Washington summit reflects the seriousness with which Jordan sees the crisis in the peace talks. But while officials here are still gauging the Israeli reaction to the King's message, the belief here is that Mr. Netanyahu "still does not get it."

The Israelis appear confused and still unable to understand the Jordanian position. On the government level, Mr. Netanyahu is trying to play down the enormity of the crisis with the Kingdom. Foreign Min-

ister David Levy tried to present the King's warning as a reaction to pressure in the Arab World and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai adopted a confrontational stand and urged Jordan to stop the criticism.

But the King's words sent shockwaves to the Israeli press and among the Israeli public opinion.

The Israelis have looked at their peace with Jordan as an example of the relationship that they would like to have with the rest of the Arab World. The Israelis love King Hussein, and in the two years since the two countries signed the peace treaty, they have seen how hard the King has worked to build warm and real peace.

Accordingly, said one official, the Israeli people realise that the King's

warning stemmed from a real disappointment with the Israeli government's handling of the peace process and concern for the future of the peace process.

The official noted that the King was not in the habit of making provocative statements. That gives his words added credibility and rings the alarm in the Israeli soci-

NEWS ANALYSIS

ety about the danger facing efforts to bring comprehensive peace to the region.

This danger seems to have been realised by members of the Labour Party, which signed the peace treaty with Jordan and the Oslo accords with the Palestinians.

According to the Jerusalem Post, former

Prime Minister Shimon Peres strongly criticised Mr. Netanyahu for the deterioration of ties between the Jewish state and Jordan.

Member of the Israeli Knesset Efraim Sneh said in an executive meeting of the Labour Party Thursday that Mr. Netanyahu damaged the relationship with Jordan.

"Netanyahu screwed the whole thing up. The most important achievement in Israel's strategy was the peace with Jordan, the Arab state with which we share the longest border. It was the warmest peace we had, the best that could be expected. But the irresponsible policy of one who does not understand how the Middle East works turned Jordan from a friend to an enemy," the Jerusalem Post quoted Mr. Sneh as

telling the meeting.

Similar was the reaction of Knesset member Haim Ramon, who said that Mr. Netanyahu "did not understand what we told him all along" about the importance of the talks with the Palestinians.

"(Netanyahu) did not grasp that when the peace with the Palestinians is struck, it influences the situation in Jordan, whose King is carrying the whole weight of the peace on his back."

In his remarks to the meeting Mr. Peres criticised Mr. Netanyahu for not revealing the harsh criticism King Hussein levelled at him during the Washington summit (see story above).

The apparently strong alarm among Labour deputies about relations

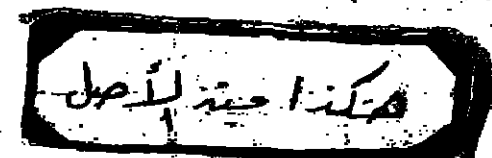
with Jordan indicates that they have understood the message that Jordan is sending the Israeli people.

But it is obvious that Jordanian officials are still trying to drive the message home to the Israelis through the series of statements they are making to the Israeli media.

"The message is simple," said one official. "The crisis will not be solved until Israel shows by deed and not words that it will implement all the agreements it has entered to with the Palestinians."

The official said that Jordan tried all possible means to get Israel to honour its agreements before the Kingdom spoke publicly of the crisis in relations. But the Israeli government did

(Continued on page 7)



Ruling party takes lead in Mauritania

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritania's ruling Democratic and Social Republican Party took an early lead on Saturday after an election for a new 79-seat national assembly in which the opposition contested seats for the first time.

Provisional results from the Interior Ministry for 16 of the seats contested in Friday's first truly multi-party legislative election, showed supporters of President Maouya Ould Sid'Ahmad Taya in the ruling party had won 10.

Ruling party members will contest the other six in a Feb. 18 second round against the action for change party, which champions the rights of the minority black Africans and freed slaves. Further results were expected later on Saturday.

The ruling party won 67 of the assembly's 79 seats in the mainly Muslim country's first legislative election in 1992, which the opposition boycotted denouncing irregularities.

Women were also standing for election for the first time on Friday, accounting for 26 of the 292 candidates.

Turnout in Nouakchott, capital of the arid former French colony straddling Arab and black Africa, appeared low with several polling stations reporting less than a third of their electorate voting. Figures from the north, Mr. Ould Taya's stronghold, suggested a much higher turnout there.

Opposition supporters, many of whom expressed irritation at the heavy turnout of soldiers and other members of the security forces at polling stations, said problems over voting cards prevented many people voting. Some cried fraud.

Half the 2.2 million people in the poor nation at the Atlantic fringe of the Sahara desert were eligible to vote.

Dominant — light-skinned

moors of Arab stock and blacks each make up a third of the population in Mauritania which won independence in 1960. Arabic-speaking ex-slaves make up the remainder.

Mr. Ould Taya, a French-trained army colonel, seized power in a bloodless coup in 1984. He launched the democratic transition in 1991 and won a six-year term as president a year later.

The poll was expected to see the victory of his supporters. The opposition complained that in many areas identity and voter cards had been given to people other than their rightful recipients, enabling some people to vote in several places.

Hamdi Ould Mouknass, leader of the Union for Democracy and Progress (UDP) said police had raided the home in a north of "a senior prds official" and had seized 3,000 cards ready for distribution. He said several people had been arrested.

The PDRS denied the claim. The UDP said similar incidents had occurred in Nouakchott and after a complaint by a foreign observer, the authorities had closed an office where cards were being handed out.

To stop people voting in different parts of the country, the authorities banned travel between constituencies on Friday, while the "wali" (governor) of Nouakchott warned anyone caught cheating that they would risk "the harshest penalties provided for under the law".

As an extra precaution, election officials made voters dip their fingers into supposedly indelible ink imported from the United States. But on leaving the polling centre, some young women had already found a way to remove the stain, using "ordinary household bleach."

Weizman says Arafat is sending conflicting messages; Netanyahu not doing enough

The Jerusalem Post

PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman yesterday chided Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat for saying he could not prevent the outbreak of a new intifada.

"This contradicts what Arafat told me this week" during his visit to Caesarea, Weizman said, adding that he had sent the PA head a message to this effect.

But Weizman at the same time intimated that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not doing enough.

"I hope (Netanyahu) will take up a few more matters," Weizman said, with-

out specifying. "I would like to see another team taking it (the ironing out of difficulties with the peace process) out of my hands. I will be happy to go back to my house in Caesarea."

The president refused to discuss rumours in the Hebrew press of strained relations with the prime minister's office over the handling of the peace process and alleged charges that he was overstepping the limits of his position.

"Everything I do is coordinated with the prime minister," he said in reference to his meetings with Arab leaders. "He has given me his blessing for my trip to Cairo."



Afghan nomads flee fighting outside a village north of Kabul after forces loyal to the Afghan government ousted two weeks ago shelled Kabul's main airbase and local fighters opened fire on Taleban militia in the surrounding villages (Reuters photo)

U.N. defers decision on Afghan credentials

UNITED NATIONS (R) — A General Assembly committee deferred a decision on Friday on the credentials of Afghanistan's U.N. delegation despite a written challenge from the Taleban group that captured Kabul last month.

This left in place, at least for the time being, the U.N. representatives of the government of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani. No date was immediately set for the next meeting of the nine-member credentials committee.

The militant Taleban seized the Afghan capital on Sept. 27. On Friday, Afghan fighters opposing the Taleban cut the main road north of Kabul, and isolated its military airbase.

killing several Taleban militia, witnesses and residents said.

The United States had proposed deferring a decision on the current Afghan delegation's credentials because of what it called the "complex situation on the ground." The Netherlands, backed by Russia, suggested taking an immediate decision to accept those credentials.

The U.N. legal counsel, Under-Secretary-General Hans Corell, told the committee a note was received on Oct. 3 from what was described as the Afghan foreign ministry saying the statements, actions and views of the delegation appointed by Mr. Rabbani "are not authoritative" and

legally valid."

That delegation was "not the legitimate representative of the Islamic state of Afghanistan and must not be given the opportunity to speak in the sessions of the general assembly," the note said. Mr. Corell said it did not list purported new representatives of Afghanistan and did not give the name or title of the person who initiated the letter.

He also noted that Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, speaking on behalf of the Rabbani government, had addressed the General Assembly on Oct. 7 without being challenged by any U.N. member.

Mr. Corell said on Oct. 10 the United Nations received

two identical letters addressed to the secretary-general and the president of the assembly, signed by Haji Mullah Mohammad Ghaus Akhund, as acting foreign minister in Kabul, saying Afghanistan's U.N. seat "must be reserved for the representative of the new ruling government."

These letters also did not list any new purported representative and thus did not amount to formal or provisional credentials. Mr. Corell added. None of the Taleban notes was circulated to committee members in advance of the meeting since they had not yet been translated into all six U.N. official languages.

Ben-Elissar to request U.S. aid for Palestinians

The Jerusalem Post

AMBASSADOR to the U.S. Elihu Ben-Elissar is expected to see phone congressman Ben Gillman (Republican-New York) on behalf of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and ask that he release \$10 million in U.S. aid to the Palestinians being held up since last November, sources said yesterday.

During a recent visit to the U.S., Netanyahu acquiesced to a personal direct appeal by President Bill Clinton that he phoned Gillman and that the money be released.

Gillman has said that he is holding up the money

until Yasser Arafat divulges the extent of PLO assets. Clinton believes a request from Netanyahu would carry more weight than an appeal from a Democratic president.

However, Netanyahu did not act as promised, although the reason remains unclear. This failure to keep his word has exacerbated the friction between Netanyahu and the Clinton administration.

Thus, it seems that the timing of the Ben-Elissar phone call is designed to narrow the points of contention between the Clinton administration and Netanyahu.

Brotherhood condemns ruling on Abu Marzouk

CAIRO (R) — The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt condemned on Saturday a U.S. federal court ruling in favour of extraditing a Palestinian Hamas leader to Israel.

The Brotherhood said in a statement that the ruling was clearly meant to please American Jews at presidential election time and would add to tension in the Middle East.

In New York on Wednesday a federal judge refused to stop extradition proceedings against Mousa Abu Marzouk, head of the political office of the Hamas movement. Mr. Abu Marzouk could face trial in Israel on murder charges because of his leadership role in Hamas.

"It is clear that the political dimension in the court's ruling is fundamental, with the aim of winning the approval of Americans Jews in the heat of the competition between the two candidates in the elections," said the Brotherhood.

"The Muslim Brotherhood, in condemning this unjust ruling, which harms U.S. policy in the region, asserts that it will not help to calm the situation down. On the contrary, it will make it more inflamed and tense. It hopes this ruling will be reviewed in the interests of truth and justice," it added.

The Brotherhood is outlawed in Egypt but remains the largest Islamist organisation in the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait's crown prince to form cabinet

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Saturday reappointed Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah as prime minister following parliamentary elections this week. "Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, the crown prince, is appointed prime minister and assigned to nominate the members of the new cabinet to U.S.," a decree issued by Sheikh Jaber said. Sheikh Saad first became prime minister in February 1978 and has since formed several successive governments. Born in 1930, the son of Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, Kuwait's emir from 1950 to 1965, Sheikh Saad has headed the government through turbulent times at home and abroad. According to the constitution, the emir appoints and relieves the prime minister regardless of the results of parliamentary elections. However, by law, at least one deputy should be given a cabinet portfolio. The current caretaker government headed by Sheikh Saad resigned on Tuesday in line with the constitution, following Monday's parliamentary elections in which pro-government deputies overturned an opposition majority.

Hebron university reopens in defiance

HEBRON (R) — The director of Hebron University defied an Israeli closure order by reopening the institution on Saturday at a new location in the city, Palestinian sources said. Since the campus was tightly shut by Israeli troops, director Nabil Al Jaabari rented a building in Hebron. On Saturday, registration of students began at the new site. Israeli soldiers surrounded the building and harassed students who queued to register for the new semester, but there were no clashes, witnesses said.

Iranians ordered to hand over guns

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian authorities have ordered the population to hand over their firearms and ammunition by Sunday or face stiff punishments, the state radio said Saturday. The call to disarm the people was issued in February by Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who offered an amnesty for those turning their guns over to the authorities before Sunday. According to official sources, some 300,000 firearms have been collected since the order was issued. The authorities launched a campaign three years ago to disarm the population, notably the members of nomadic tribes in the southern and eastern parts of the country. A large quantity of arms fell into public hands in the chaos surrounding the 1979 Islamic revolution and many more have been smuggled into the country from neighbouring Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Tehran on Friday, police set up tents at crossroads to facilitate the collection of arms before the deadline.

Ramon says he fixed Deri-Abbas meeting

The Jerusalem Post

MEMBER OF KNESSET

(MK) Haim Ramon, who arranged a "secret" meeting Wednesday night between Shas leader MK Aryeh Deri and Arafat's number two man Mahmoud Abbas, said yesterday that it was easier to hold such meetings now than before the elections. Ramon said on Israeli Radio that "meetings like this should have taken place before. But before the elections Shas's voters would have been more critical of it. Today, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shook Arafat's hands and claimed he was enchanted by him, it was easier."

Ramon said Abbas — who was curious about Deri, Shas and Shas mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's positions — asked to meet Deri. Ramon approached Deri, who after consulting Yosef and advising Netanyahu, was glad to come to the meeting.

"It's important for Shas, which is the second largest party in the coalition and a moderate party, to meet the

number two man in the Palestinian Authority," he added.

Ramon said Abbas's main complaint was that for the past three months, until this past Sunday, no negotiations were being held with the Palestinians at all. Dan Shomron, the head of the steering committee for negotiations with the Palestinians, came to one meeting and said he was not authorised to do anything, Abbas told Ramon.

"There are many problems between the two sides. If Netanyahu had said let's sit down and solve them, the Palestinians may have been more flexible on the Hebron issue. But when nothing happens, then bloody events occur," Ramon said.

"I'm glad Deri came to the meeting and the two got to know each other and talk. Only direct talks can advance the peace process. Creating confidence between the two sides — that's the essential element which is missing between the Palestinian Authority and the prime minister and his people."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Fievels American Tails
14:30 You Bet Your Life
15:00 French Programme
15:30 French Programme
16:00 World Echo
16:30 The Famous Five (Drama)
17:00 News Flash
17:01 Search and Rescue
18:00 French Programme
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:01 Auto-Classics
20:30 Album Show
21:10 Blackie's Magic
22:00 News in English
22:30 Madison
23:15 Miami Vice
23:59 Yes Mister

PRAYER TIMES

04:16 Fajr
05:33 (Sunrise) Doha
11:22 Dhur
14:39 'Asr
17:11 Maghreb
18:28 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifeth. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Relative cold weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance for scattered rain and winds becoming westerly to northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 14/22

Aqaba 20/32

Deserts 11/27

Jordan Valley 20/32

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 24, Aqaba 33 Humidity

readings: Amman 36 per cent.

Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446

Dr. Jamal Jbarah 847351

Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 602507

Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb 875748

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salan pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ya'qoub Al Khatib 989000

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192 621111, 677777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Dept. 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 64281/6

Akileh Maternity 642341/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

..... 09/983323

Zarqa National Hospital

..... 09/900560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

..... 09/990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

..... 02/275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

..... 02/272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital

..... 02/247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

..... 03/314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information

department at the Queen Alia

International Airport Tel.

(08)53200-5, where it should

always be verified. Information on

other flights can be supplied on

phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

08:30 Jeddah (RJ)

08:

Premier discusses Algerian situation with visiting Islamist

AMMAN (J.T.) — Visiting Algerian Sheikh Mahfouz Nihnah met Saturday with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to discuss, among other issues, Jordanian cooperation in combating distortions of Islam and Muslims.

Sheikh Nihnah heads the Algerian Islamic Society Movement (AISM).

The two men also discussed potential cultural seminars, both regional and international, which might reflect a more accurate image of the Islamic faith, according to a statement following the meeting at the Prime Ministry.

The two also consulted over bilateral ties, regional development and the political situation in Algeria.

Sheikh Nihnah was cited as describing the meeting as very useful and covering all relevant issues impacting the two countries.

He said that the security situation in Algeria is showing improvements and that the country is beginning to return to normal following several recent bomb attacks.

The Sheikh told Jordan Television that his current tour of Arab countries, beginning with Syria, is aimed at re-establishing close contacts between



Visiting Algerian delegation Saturday meets with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to discuss various issues of social and Islamic concern (Petra photo)

Algeria and other Arab countries following a period of semi-isolation from the rest of the Arab World.

Sheikh Nihnah met earlier with Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi who stressed Jordan's enthusiasm in reinforcing relations between the two countries.

They reviewed parliamentary procedure in both countries, with Mr. Lawzi emphasising Jordan's support of Algerian national unity.

Sheikh Nihnah Saturday also met the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour for a discussion regarding cooperation in parliamentary affairs.

Mr. Srour stressed Jordan's pleasure at this parliamentary visit and Sheikh Nihnah, accompanied by an official delegation, said his visit was directed at examining Jordanian democratic processes and political pluralism.

Sheikh Nihnah also briefed his hosts on AISM activities saying his movement seeks regular meetings and dialogue with parliamentarians from both Algeria and Jordan for the exchange of ideas about various issues concerning the Arab World.

Radiology conference opens with appeal for Jerusalem hospital

AMMAN (Petra) — During the opening of a medical conference on radiation Saturday, President of the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) Bassem Dajani appealed to physicians in the Arab World to provide financial and medical assistance to the Maqassed Hospital in Palestine.

According to Dr. Dajani, the hospital, located in East Jerusalem, "is currently facing financial constraints and continued harassment by the Israeli authorities." Dr. Dajani said that unless help is forthcoming, the hospital would have to close down.

Delegates from six Arab

countries and the United States are in Amman to discuss modern trends in radiology and its role in disease treatment.

Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat, a physician himself, opened the meeting on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein, stressing that radiology services have significantly contributed towards promoting medical treatment.

Jordan had only one radiology unit in 1951, but numerous units have since been installed in the country's private and public hospitals.

The three-day meeting is organized by the Jordanian Radiological Society (JRS).



Mustafa Shneikat, Minister of Agriculture, speaking at the opening of the radiology conference.

JRS President Mahmoud Faiyad said the meeting offers Jordanian radiology specialists the

opportunity to exchange views and benefit from the latest developments in the field.

The delegates from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. will discuss radiological diagnosis of various diseases affecting blood cells, the heart, kidneys, the nervous system, the chest and children's diseases.

Following the opening session, Dr. Shneikat inaugurated an exhibition of medical equipment organized by various Jordanian medical institutions.

Conference to analyse Arab-European relations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arab and European intellectuals are heading to Vienna to probe the status of their countries' relations.

"The Euro-Arab Dimension: One Year after Barcelona: Need for Stability, Need for Transformation" is the name of a symposium slated to be held in the Austrian capital on Oct. 23 and 24, according to a statement released Saturday by symposium organizers.

The Arab Thought Forum (ATF) and the Bruno Kreisky Forum (BKF) in Austria, said that the delegates, prominent personages from various

European and Arab countries, will discuss a series of related reports appropriate to the conference theme.

According to the statement, these reports will cover: Arab-European relations, the outcome and impact of the Barcelona meeting, held in November last year.

That meeting brought together 15 European countries and 12 Mediterranean countries to discuss, political, economic, and social issues.

The conference ended with the issuance of the Barcelona Declaration which in effect demon-

strated the intent of the European countries to forge ahead in cooperative endeavours with their Mediterranean neighbours.

The meeting in Vienna will delve into discussion of European relations with Mediterranean countries, and a comparison between the Barcelona, and Middle East and North Africa conferences.

This is the second symposium of its kind, the first one was held in Amman last December which dealt with Austrian foreign policy since the end of the cold war, developments in Eastern

Europe, Arab-Austrian relations and issues related to political pluralism and democracy.

The two-day meeting reflects the importance which Austria attaches to its relations with the Arab World, as well as the development of bilateral relations during the term of Chancellor Kreisky (1970-83), when Austria played a major role in highlighting the Palestinian problem and Kreisky, the leader of Austria's Social Democratic Party, played a role in mediating between Israelis and the Arabs, the statement said.

Turkey, Jordan confer on transportation issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman and Ankara recently agreed on various measures regarding transit, transportation and travellers in Turkey and Jordan.

Speaking upon his return from the meeting in Ankara, Ministry of Transport Secretary General Issa Ayoub Saturday said that a Jordanian-Turkish joint committee discussed a number of measures designed to facilitate transportation of travellers and goods to and from both countries as well as issues regarding the traversing of these nations in transit to other countries.

Mr. Ayoub further confirmed that the two countries have decided to effect an agreement jointly signed in 1988, a part of which bans empty Turkish trucks entry into Jordan to receive wares intended for a third destination, except for empty trucks passing in transit through Jordanian territory. By this arrangement, the Jordanian trucks will retain leverage for loading and transporting goods.

He said that the two sides also agreed to permit Jordanian trucks, such as refrigerated trucks laden with produce, to pass in transit through Turkish territory. This procedure, he affirmed, will have a positive effect on the transportation business as it will enhance the Kingdom's export capabilities.

Mr. Ayoub outlined another item stating that Jordan and Turkey should offer every possible facility for trucks of both countries at the border posts, especially those hauling perishable goods, as well as the removal of any barrier which might delay the trucks from reaching their destinations in a timely manner.

The joint committee approved the operation of regular passenger transport between Turkey and Jordan, organized by private companies in their respective countries, added Mr. Ayoub.

The committee also agreed that Jordanian truck drivers and their assistants should be issued entry visas valid for six months either at the Turkish embassy in Amman or at border posts in order to facilitate transportation of goods, he said.

Representatives of the Ministries of Transport, Interior and Finance were among those attending the conference on Oct. 8 and 9.

German delegation reviews peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — A visiting German delegation representing the Socialist Party Saturday met with Jordanian parliamentarians to discuss the Middle East peace process, the general regional situation and bilateral parliamentary cooperation.

The delegation, whose members professed interest in the Middle Eastern political affairs and especially Jordanian-Palestinian relations, held a meeting with the chairman and members of the Arab and International Affairs Committee in the Lower House of Parliament.

Committee Chairman Fawzi Toumeih reviewed the different stages of the Arab-Israeli peace process, stating that it had been going smoothly until the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

Subsequent to the meeting, Dr. Toumeih outlined the discussion as covering current Israeli policy of establishing Jewish settlements on Arab land, government refusal to implement the Oslo accord which, among other things,

stipulates Israeli troop redeployment from Hebron, and added that continued Israeli closure of Palestinian areas as well as other repressive measures threaten to renew hostilities and the potential collapse of the peace process.

He stressed that Jordan continues to seek a comprehensive settlement on the issue but that Israeli procedures posed grave risks.

Dr. Toumeih said that the German parliamentarians expressed full understanding of the regional issues and the change in Israeli policy regarding the peace process and that they expressed apprehension that the peace process would be dealt a severe blow as a result of current Israeli policies.

During the meeting, Dr. Toumeih reviewed democratic process as exercised in the Kingdom and parliamentary, economic and political cooperation between the two countries.

Programme tests for hearing deficiencies at early educational stage

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — When a youngster appears to be a slow learner, a daydreamer, or does not always finish words when speaking, a teacher might consider that the child has a hearing deficiency.

A special school programme for early identification of hearing problems, called Educational Audiology Review (EAR), was adopted by two major schools in Amman who this year are updating to another phase which includes a base-line hearing screening procedure.

The programme, introduced by the Specialised Audiology Centre (SAC), aims at preventing hearing problems, and therefore language and learning problems, among kindergarten students.

It is also invested in lowering the age of identification of children with any type of hearing problem.

"We examined 435 kindergarten and first-grade students in two schools and discovered that some of them needed specific attention," said Manal Hamzeh, founder and director of the SAC.

Several of them, Ms. Hamzeh said, will go through a detailed diagnostic test to specify the presence and type of communication problem.

"This will result in detecting children [with

hearing deficiencies] at an early stage in their lives, but identification doesn't mean anything if we do not intervene to manage the child early," she said.

According to Ms. Hamzeh, the Ahliyyah School for Girls adopted another stage in the EAR programme to manage classroom acquisitions and has adopted a special language intervention programme in kindergarten classes.

All kindergarten students in the school will go through an extensive process of sound diagnostic testing to make proper recommendations of necessary changes in the classroom to reduce noise and, therefore, improve the reception of what is being taught, she explained.

Ms. Hamzeh pointed to the classroom environment concerning children with communication difficulties.

The environment can pose problems as well, she said. The teacher's message may not be heard properly as a result of poor quality acoustics compounded by competing noises from inside and outside the classroom.

As a result, she maintained, students will try to adapt and compensate through other senses such as their vision.

If such a case occurs, the child's performance is below what it potentially could be during the crucial



Director of the Specialised Audio Centre Manal Hamzeh screens for possible evidence of hearing loss in a recently introduced programme (Photo by Rana Hussein)

development years, and he/she starts to exhibit behavioural changes, including environmental and social difficulties and, in extreme cases, language delays leading to academic struggles.

To overcome such problems, Ms. Hamzeh noted, a special sound system will be installed in one of the classrooms to prioritise the teacher's voice above other noise to guarantee a constant and clear lesson.

This special classroom will be used as an experimental site in the scholastic year 1996-97, she said, in order to compare it with a

class without such amplification. The differences between the student's academic performance, language progress, listening abilities, spelling tests, general behaviour plus any reduction of teachers' voice fatigue will all be studied, she said.

The results, Ms. Hamzeh stressed, should provide hard data for this school and others that these educational institutions should invest in management of classroom environments.

In addition, she said, such management will reduce the cost of future special services for those

children with language and academic problems.

"Why don't we do the [preventive] primary work, rather than spend a lot of money later on. The possible negative ramifications of their development are too significant to overlook,"

Rana Sha'ban, coordinator of Al Kashef Centre for Special Needs at the Ahliyyah School for Girls, said the school was encouraged to adopt such a programme because "it helped us to detect students with communication problems." "Some of our students are not proceeding normal-

ly like others in the classroom which negatively reflects on their overall performance. But this programme helped us discover why some students suffered from academic problems," Ms. Sha'ban said.

The ones discovered to have hearing difficulties are being treated in a special way, which includes class seating arrangements and instructions for teachers to pay extra attention to these students by facing them and speaking clearly and slowly.

"This way we can guarantee that these students will not miss anything in class and eliminate any gaps between them and other students," Ms. Sha'ban told the Jordan Times.

According to Ms. Hamzeh, of the 730 kindergarten students examined last year at two private schools in Amman, 5.4 per cent of them had communication difficulties.

These, she says, consist of hearing, speech, and/or language problems of different degrees and natures, which she asserted need special service in homes, classrooms and sometimes in a specialised centre.

"My aim is to have at least one model programme in one school that may serve as a base of cooperation with other schools. In turn, this programme would reach as many children as possible."

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

* "Educational Development in Jordan" by Minister of Education Dr. Munther Al Masri at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Sculpture and painting exhibition by Mohammad Bushnaq at Kan Zaman, until Oct. 18.

* Works by Ghassan Abu Leban at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 23.

* "Amman Sixth International Book Exhibition" at the International Exhibition Centre, University Road, until Oct. 17.

* "Coloured Silence" exhibition by Samira Abdul Wahab at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel 687598), until Oct. 20.

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at the French Cultural Centre, until Oct. 29.

Friends and colleagues of

Antoni Ostras

mourn his sudden and untimely passing and offer their deep sympathy to Ina and Mark

He will be missed as a good friend and a good archaeologist

Department of Antiquities

Friends of Archaeology

British Institute at Amman for

Archaeology and History

American Centre for Oriental Research

German Protestant Institute

Institut Francais de Proche Orient

U.S. warns North Korea to change attitude towards Seoul

SEOUL (R) — The senior U.S. official in Asia Saturday denied any rift with South Korea over how to respond to a North Korean submarine incursion, and he warned Pyongyang to "change its attitude" towards Seoul.

But as Winston Lord delivered his comments at the end of a three-day visit to Seoul, North Korea continued its threats to punish Seoul for the deaths of its soldiers who landed by submarine in South Korea last month.

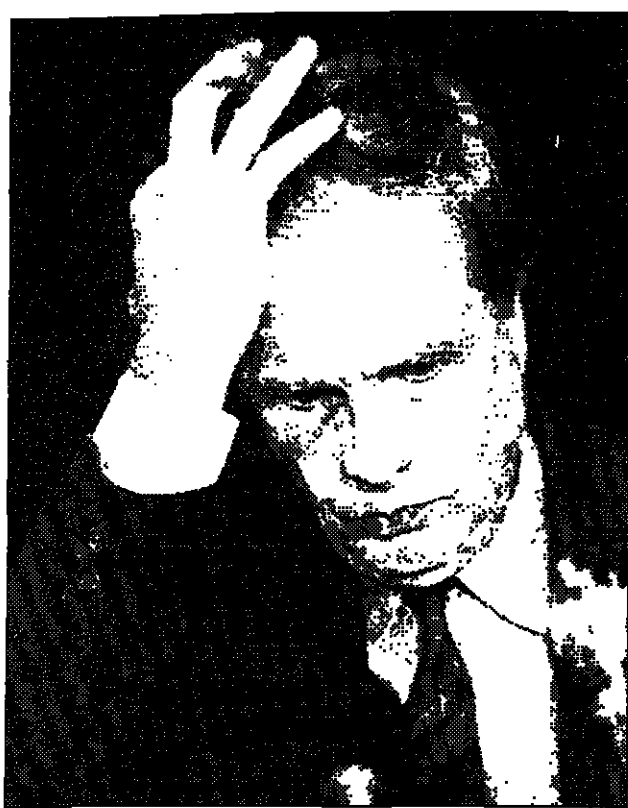
Mr. Lord, whose Seoul trip was aimed at displaying support for one of Washington's closest allies, told a news conference Saturday: "There have been no rifts in our alliance."

Reports suggesting the United States was at odds with South Korea were "highly exaggerated, misleading and can only tempt the North to try to drive a wedge between us," the U.S. assistant secretary of state said, adding: "This will never happen."

Mr. Lord said: "U.S.-North Korean relations can only go so far without progress in Korean North-South relations." He added: "We call upon North Korea to change course and change attitude. It's not too late to engage with the rest of the world."

But in a communique carried by the official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), North Korea blamed the Southern government of President Kim Young-Sam for worsening tensions on the peninsula over the submarine incident.

Twenty-two of 26 North Korean soldiers who came ashore from the submarine, found grounded on rocks last month, have been killed by South Korean troops or



Winston Lord, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, explains about results of his meetings with South Korean officials Saturday in Seoul. Lord arrived in Seoul on Thursday for a three-day visit to exchange views on the mounting tension between the two Koreas (Reuters photo)

found dead. One has been captured alive and a hunt is on for the remaining three.

"We will certainly punish the Kim Young-Sam group, the very one who fabricated the incident, and make them pay for the blood," the KCNA report said.

Pyeongyang, which claims the submarine drifted into Southern waters after developing engine trouble, has demanded Seoul return the bodies along with survivors and the vessel.

Mr. Lord said Washington and Seoul agreed to press ahead with implementation of a landmark 1994 nuclear pact, under which Pyongyang agreed to scrap its suspected nuclear weapons

programme in return for two light water nuclear reactors.

Mr. Lord also said Washington and Seoul would keep open an offer to Pyongyang for four-party peace talks which include China.

"We do not wish to isolate North Korea. South Korea does not wish to isolate North Korea," he said. "But of course in the current climate it cannot be business-as-usual," he said. There would be a "pause in the pace of our activities."

Although Mr. Lord said the situation on the Korean peninsula was serious and added that "it does carry some risks and dangers," his

comments were far more measured than statements from senior Seoul officials, including President Kim Young-Sam, who has warned the crisis could result in "all-out war."

"I don't want to inflate the situation," Mr. Lord said.

He made no mention of any retaliation, although he said Washington and Seoul agreed to pursue action within the United Nations and noted the U.N. Security Council had unanimously agreed on a statement condemning Pyongyang.

Mr. Lord again called on Pyongyang to release immediately U.S. citizen Evan Carl Hunziker, arrested as a spy for South Korea on charges that carry the death penalty. "I call for his release immediately and that these ludicrous charges be dropped."

Mr. Lord said the United States was not prepared to link the case with the submarine incident. South Korea believes North Korea raised the spy issue to try to weaken Washington's resolve to back Seoul over the incursion.

Pyeongyang also demanded Saturday Seoul cancel plans for annual joint military exercises with the United States codenamed Foal Eagle '96 and warned the drills were "provocative."

The majority of South Korean and U.S. troops stationed in South Korea plan to join in the exercises later this month.

On Saturday, South Korea's National Assembly, in which Mr. Kim's ruling party has a slim majority, adopted a resolution denouncing the submarine incursion, asking the government to strengthen national security and demanding Pyongyang apologise.



President Nelson Mandela shares a joke with United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the fourth leg of his five nation African tour Saturday (Reuters photo)

Christopher finds no allies in S. Africa

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela asserted South Africa's leading role in Africa and firmly rejected unilateral cooperation with Washington when he received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Saturday.

The 78-year-old president appeared to give Mr. Christopher a cool reception when the two men met at Mr. Mandela's official residence, Genadendal, reflecting a general chilliness in relations between the new democracy and the superpower.

There appeared to have been little consensus on key issues after they emerged from the 45-minute early morning meeting that focused mainly on conflict resolution in Africa.

The most glaring disagreement came on the question of filling the post of United Nations secretary general, with Mr. Mandela joining other African leaders in supporting a second term for the incumbent, Boutros Ghali.

The United States staunchly opposes the Egyptian's reelection because it feels he has not done enough to reform the U.N. bureaucracy. Mr. Christopher is believed to be seeking another African candidate for the post during his trip.

"Our view in Africa is to support Boutros Ghali in seeking a second term," Mr. Mandela told journalists, as he stood with Mr. Christopher on the steps of the presidential mansion after the meeting.

Mr. Mandela's only concession was a promise to investigate what progress has been made in setting up an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) delegation to

discuss the matter with President Bill Clinton.

If Mr. Christopher, who arrived here late Friday on the fourth stop of a five nation swing through the continent, was concerned at the lack of agreement during the meeting, he did not show it.

"I am not at all disappointed... We have covered a lot of ground in the time we have spent together," he said.

He praised Mr. Mandela for being "a strong force for leadership in Africa" and said he would gather the opinions he has gathered to reformulate the proposal on the peacekeeping force.

"Our concern not only for South Africa, but for the continent as a whole," Mr. Christopher said after a meeting later with Mr. Mandela's deputy and likely successor, Thabo Mbeki, at the hillside residence on the government estate.

"(This is) reflected by the trip I have taken out here; and the indication of President (Bill) Clinton and Vice-President (Al) Gore's strong determination to continue to have an important engagement with Africa."

Mr. Mandela and Mr. Christopher's talks on the Burundi crisis was inconclusive with Mr. Mandela indicating that South Africa will continue to act through the Commonwealth, rather than on its own, in dealing with human rights abuses in Nigeria.

Mr. Christopher was also unsuccessful in selling Mr. Mandela the idea of a United States-convened African Crisis Reaction Force — one of the key proposals in the secretary of state's diplomatic bag.

Mr. Mandela, reaffirming

his now well-worn position that South Africa will not act alone in major international issues, said such an initiative should come from the United Nations and that the OAU should be involved.

"I would like the whole process to come through the U.N.," Mr. Mandela said.

"If the request to join an African crisis reaction force came from the U.N., South Africa would consult the head of its defence and parliament and then consider that if it was absolutely essential we would send troops," he said.

Mr. Mandela was clearly well-prepared for the proposal — among those present at the meeting were George Meiring, the head of the South African Defence Force, and Tony Yengeni, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence.

Mr. Christopher got the same response to the Africa peace force idea from Mr. Mbeki.

"Clearly, this is a matter that we as South Africa would have to discuss with... (the 12-nation) Southern African Development Community in the first instance, and also more broadly with the OAU," Mr. Mbeki said.

Mr. Christopher has already secured agreement in principle for the plan from Mali, Ethiopia and Tanzania while Uganda and Kenya have expressed interest.

After his meeting with Mr. Mandela and Mr. Mbeki, Mr. Christopher signed an agreement here granting \$400,000 worth of aid to the truth and reconciliation commission, which probing apartheid-era human right abuses.

Indonesian human rights body links government to riots

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's official human rights watchdog Saturday linked the authorities to the start of a riot which rocked Jakarta in July and said five people died and 149 were injured in the violence.

In its final official report on the July 27 incident, it said 23 people were still missing and called on the authorities to continue to search for them and determine whether they were alive or dead.

It said there were two phases to the events: A factional assault backed by the security forces on the headquarters of the minority Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), and subsequent rioting which it said was influenced by the violent takeover of the PDI building.

The assault on the headquarters followed a rebel PDI congress financed by the government in the north Sumatran city of Medan in June in which Megawati Sukarnoputri was ousted as party leader by parliamentary deputy speaker Surjadi.

"The takeover of the PDI secretariat on July 27 was an action that was carried out violently by the executive board of the Medan congress and a group of its supporters, together with the security forces," the report said.

"This was the result of the creation of open conflict in the PDI, where the government had involved itself excessively and in a biased way out of proportion to its function as a manager of politics and security."

"The social disturbances that broke out and spread... were influenced by the use of violence in the takeover of the secretariat," it said.

Political analysts have said the government backed the ousting of Ms. Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's late founding President Sukarno, over concern that she might draw votes from the ruling Golkar Party in general elections next year.

The commission reaffirmed its findings of a preliminary report in August which said five people had died and 149 were injured in the riots, the worst in Jakarta in more than two decades which caused \$43 million damage.

The government had challenged the body, set up by presidential decree in 1993, to prove its findings after the military said there were only four deaths and nobody missing in the riots.

The commission revised down its earlier total of 74 people missing to 23 and said that as of Saturday, 136 people remained in custody.

"The term missing means they have not yet returned home to their address of origin, they cannot be contacted, they are travelling and/or they are possibly dead," Secretary-General Baharuddin Lopa said reading the six-page report.

"The commission recommends... the government through its authorised agencies look for those people who are lost and the possibility that people have died still needs to be checked."

The report named the dead as Asmayadi Soleh, 19, Slamet, 52, Suganda Siagian, 21, Uju Bin Asep, 31, and Sariwan, 40.

It said doctors' reports or autopsies showed the first two died of wounds from blunt instruments, the third received fatal burns, the fourth had a heart attack and the fifth was shot. It was not known who had shot him.

Last Wednesday 64 of 124 people arrested in and around the party headquarters went on trial. Lawyers say all are members or supporters of Ms. Megawati's faction of the PDI.

The commission called on the government not to discriminate and to take legal action against the 200 Surjadi supporters who

Republicans press Dole to wield sharper hatchet

FINDLAY, Ohio (AFP) — Advisors are putting the squeeze on Bob Dole to sharpen his attacks on President Bill Clinton as time runs out on the Republican's struggle to wrest the White House from the Democrat's grip.

With Mr. Clinton on a winning streak in the polls three weeks from the Nov. 5 poll, Sen. Dole is debating whether to maintain a polite demeanor for the rest of the campaign or take off the gloves and go for broke.

The 73-year-old former senate leader has faced complaints all week from fellow Republicans who think it is time to attack Mr. Clinton for his personal foibles.

Many said Sen. Dole missed his chance during the first presidential debate on Oct. 6 by refusing to mention Mr. Clinton's sordid Whitewater investment deal or his administration's improper request for FBI files on political rivals.

Some were even urging Sen. Dole to raise Mr. Clinton's alleged affair with a lounge singer and the sexual harassment suit filed by a former government employee in Arkansas, where Mr. Clinton was governor.

William Bennett, a former education secretary and respected voice in the Republican Party, said the Dole campaign would make a "systematic presentation" next week of what it considers "violations of the public trust" by the Clinton administration.

He told reporters that the issues to be laid out would include the FBI files controversy, the White House Travel Office dispute, a Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. report questioning Hillary Rodham Clinton's legal work in Arkansas and the president's "dangling of a pardon" to his former Whitewater partners.

"These are not peccadilloes. These are not small things. These are very serious charges and raise issues about the public trust," said Mr. Bennett, campaigning with Sen. Dole in Ohio.

Sen. Dole's running mate Jack Kemp disappointed the conservatives further by keeping it clean in the vice presidential debates Wednesday, even though the number two is supposed to play attack dog.

Initially, Sen. Dole appeared to be listen-

ing to the complaints. On Tuesday he called Mr. Clinton "Bozo" the clown and Thursday he said that in the final debate next Wednesday: "We're going to ask President Clinton a few questions."

Those fighting words lasted but a few hours, however.

"I'd like to win but there are certain limits," he said later Thursday in an ABC interview.

"I can't see myself getting into the mud here in the last three weeks... Whatever happens, I want to be at peace with myself when it's over."

Indeed, Sen. Dole gave up everything for his third and last White House bid by leaving his Senate leadership post after 35 years in Congress, and he clearly does not want to sacrifice his reputation as well.

"There's a myth out there that Bob Dole is mean," he incredulously told a business group Tuesday, pointing out that he was once voted the most popular senator to work with.

Though his wit is wry and sometimes dark, and his political history has cast him as a hatchet man and attack dog for other Republican stalwarts, getting into personal matters is just not Sen. Dole's style.

But the hands-off approach may deprive Sen. Dole of his only ammunition against Mr. Clinton, who is enjoying a strong economy and relative peace in the world.

Sen. Dole's one big shot at wooing the contented and disinterested electorate — his 15-per cent tax cut — is not flying, nor are his warnings that Mr. Clinton is a closet liberal who will return to his true colours after his reelection.

The first major post-debate polls Friday showed Sen. Dole narrowing Mr. Clinton's 20-point lead to between nine and 12, but that is still a big edge with just 24 days to go.

Sen. Dole knows that nasty campaigning can look like an act of desperation that turns voters off, as he tried it with ill effect after his devastating defeat in the first party primary earlier this year.

What he appears to favour is straddling the fence.

Kashmir blast kills 2, injures 8

SRINAGAR, India (R) — A bomb blast killed a seven-year-old girl and her mother in a community near Srinagar, the summer capital of India's troubled Jammu and Kashmir state, police said Saturday.

At least eight Indian soldiers were injured in the explosion which occurred late Friday, they said.

The bomb, planted in a scooter by separatist guerrillas, wrecked a passing army vehicle in Elahi Bagh area of Bachepora, 12 kilometres northeast of Srinagar, police said. The bomb had been detonated by remote control, they added.

Harkat-ul-Ansar, an Islamic militant group, claimed responsibility for the blast.

"Our Mujahideen in a bomb attack near Bachepora completely destroyed an Indian army vehicle killing all on board," a Harkat-ul-Ansar statement in Urdu and delivered to local newspaper offices in Srinagar Saturday said.

India says Harkat-ul-Ansar is linked to the shadowy Al-Faran Group which kidnapped four western tourists as hostages on July 4, 1995. Harkat-ul-Ansar denies the charge.

Harkat said that the girl and her mother were killed in retaliatory fire by Indian soldiers after the blast.

Residents of the area said that scores of houses were ransacked by Indian soldiers and two of them were set on fire after the bomb attack. Witnesses said Indian troops fired in the air and beat up local residents.

More than a dozen militant groups in Kashmir are fighting for independence from India or for closer ties with neighbouring Pakistan.

Police and hospitals say more than 20,000 people have been killed in a six-year-old rebellion in the Himalayan region, which broke out in January 1990.

African leaders keep sanctions on Burundi

ARUSHA, Tanzania (R) — African leaders agreed Saturday to maintain their economic embargo against war-torn Burundi despite a suggestion from the United States that sanctions should be eased.

"The summit reiterated that the objective of the sanctions is to serve as an effective means of securing

a negotiated settlement between all parties to the conflict," they said in a statement.

The leaders said they had received a letter from Burundi's Tutsi military ruler Pierre Buyoya committing himself to unconditional negotiations with the Hutu.

But the leaders said they would send a ministerial de-

legation to Burundi to ascertain Maj. Buyoya's seriousness.

"Heads of state gave the warring parties in Burundi a period of one month from Saturday in which to start negotiations or face unspecified measures from the regional group," the leaders said.

Blind martial artist not charged death

PHILADELPHIA (R) —

28-year-old blind martial arts training not be charged in the death of a would-be robber in a struggle with a man, U.S. prosecutor Friday. The incident "clear case of self-defense."

Therefore, no charges will be filed, Philadelphia District Attorney Lynn

Ham said in a statement. Courtney Beswick, since birth, was

hailed as a hero in his neighbourhood in the mantown section of Philadelphia after Wednesday

incident in which he killed Ervin, 29, died of a

injury in a struggle with Mr. Beswick. Police

Ervin had tried to kill Beswick. Cpl. Jim

said Mr. Beswick and police "He was

from behind and pushed up against a wall. Then he

flipped him and they struggled on the ground. Beswick used a neck hold to

subdue his assailant." Ervin had a record of eight

robbery or theft convictions in the Philadelphia area. Mr. Beswick was a

high-school wrestling star and trained martial artist. "He sent a message... They

won't bother blind people, that's for sure. They might take their chance with people who can see," neighbour Joshua Evans told

Philadelphia television station WPVI. But neighbours also said Mr. Beswick was

shaken by the incident. "Courtney has been devastated by that. He's not a

killer. He and his mother, even told me they said a prayer for the guy," neighbour Barbara Harper told

the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper.

U.K.'s 'House of Horrors' ground to dust

GLOUCESTER, England (R) — Bricks and masonry from Britain's "House of Horrors," where nine

young women and girls were murdered and buried, were ground to dust

Saturday in a top-security operation aimed at deterring souvenir hunters.

Security guards rode in trucks taking rubble to a waste tip from the demolished home of Fred

Rosemary West, who tortured and killed 10 people including their own daughter.

"There will be nothing left of 25 Cromwell Street except unrecognisable and unretrievable dust. We

believe it was important to completely dispose of the property in this carefully planned way," said Gloucester City Council

spokesman Mike McCabe. Rosemary West is serving a life

term for the killings although she has always maintained her innocence in one of Britain's most

horrifying murder cases. Her husband Fred, who was jointly charged, killed

himself in jail while awaiting trial. The prosecution in last year's trial maintained the Wests acted

together to lure young women to their home, where they were sexually assaulted and tortured before

being killed. Nine of the 10 bodies were found buried in the garden and cellar of the house in the south-western city of Gloucester.

Parachutist hits glider, breaks wing

CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES, France (AFP) — A parachutist performing a free fall hit a glider near here, breaking its wing, police said Monday. The

amateur parachutist, Martial Troyon, 40, suffered head injuries but was able to open his parachute, and landed safely. The glider and its two occupants also landed without incident after the collision. Mr. Troyon jumped into free fall, 2,800 metres and hit the glider at 1,800 metres. The glider had taken off from Usseldange, in Luxembourg, near this north-eastern city.

Blind martial artist not charged with death

PHILADELPHIA — A 29-year-old blind martial artist was not charged with the death of a woman in a struggle on Friday. The incident occurred in a public place. The woman was killed. The martial artist was not charged with the death.

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Helen Clark (2nd right), leader of the Labour Party, is about to cast her vote Saturday at Kowhai Intermediate School in New Zealand's first election under the German-style Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system after voting out the old British-style first-past-the-post in a 1993 referendum (Reuters photo)

N. Zealand parties begin horse-trading after polls

WELLINGTON (AFP) — New Zealand's political parties began intensive horse-trading as Saturday's general election results were counted, with Prime Minister Jim Bolger saying he would form a minority coalition government if necessary.

With around two thirds of the vote counted for the 120 seats in parliament, Mr. Bolger's National Party had secured 44 seats, the centre-left Labour 37, the economic nationalists New Zealand First (NZF) 17, the far-left Alliance 13, the right-wing Act Party eight and United one.

While the National Party had claimed the greatest number of seats, on those results a possible centre-left coalition of Labour, Alliance and the NZF would have 67 seats, compared to 53 for a centre-right grouping of National, Act and United.

Opposition Labour Party leader Helen Clark said she

was seeking to form a government that would make her the country's first female prime minister.

"Certainly leadership of this country would be a great honour that I would accept," she told supporters in Auckland.

Mr. Bolger, however, told supporters he was aiming to stay in office as leader of a minority conservative National Party government if necessary.

"We have the possibility of either a minority government or a coalition majority government depending on which way people move over the next few weeks," Mr. Bolger said.

With around a 90 per cent turnout it may be the heaviest vote ever and the numbers markedly slowed the posting of results. Parliament is scheduled to meet again on Dec. 13, by which time a government must have been formed.

The inconclusive early results climaxed an historic

day which saw New Zealand vote in its first proportional representation ballot, replacing the first-past-the-post system.

NZF leader Winston Peters was not showing his hand.

He told his supporters his negotiating team would seek "political and economic stability" and "a new partnership" in parliament.

"New Zealand First is exercising the balance of responsibility for we want a new style of politics, where parliament works together rather than dividing its MPs into confrontational and tribal teams," Mr. Peters said.

Speaking on Television New Zealand, former Labour Prime Minister David Lange said Mr. Bolger had room to move in attracting other groups to his party.

"You've got a considerable number of people in parliament now who are into their second or third political allegiances, and

the prime minister or the leader of the opposition still has scope and does not actually have to take a formal party into coalition," he said.

Mr. Bolger told supporters that National had the highest level of support by a big margin of any party in the country. His party had maintained its 1993 share of the vote, while Labour had slipped 20 per cent and the Alliance 30 per cent.

"New Zealanders do not want to shift to a hard left political position," Mr. Bolger said. "They want to stay somewhere centre, centre-right."

he acknowledged NZF was "well positioned" for the future with Mr. Peters as a kingmaker.

"Politics is a strange business, clearly New Zealand First and Winston Peters will have a major role in the weeks or days ahead."

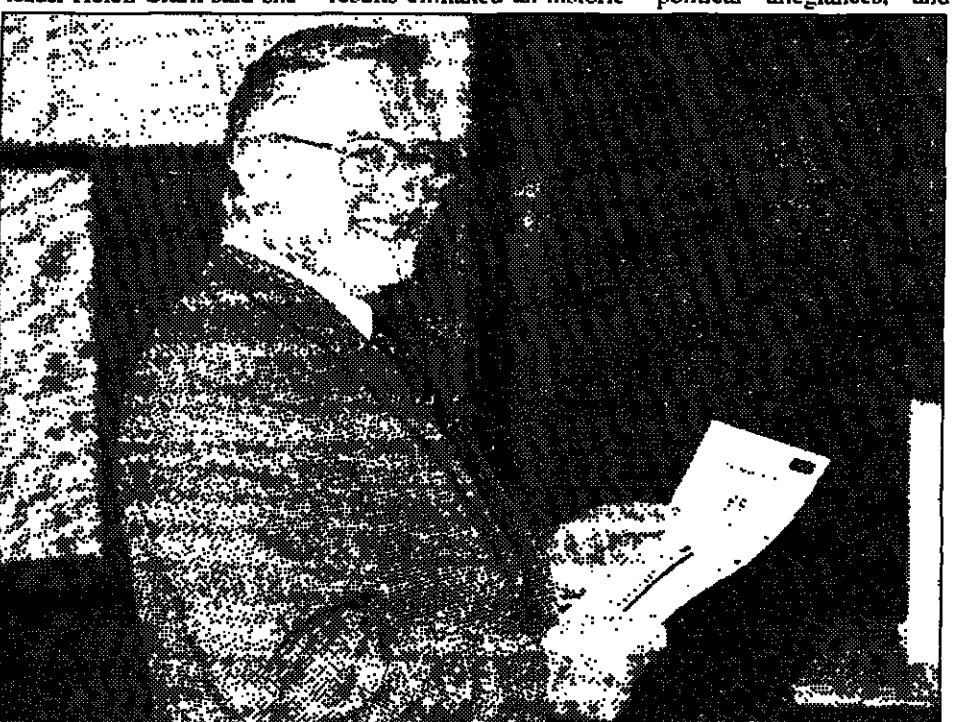
He said he would rule no party in or out of coalitions and that coalitions should be formed on policies, not personalities. Mr. Bolger said he would continue to govern in a caretaker role and said there was no instability in the country.

"I want to say that we shouldn't rule out... minority governments. We actually governed as a minority government in the last three years and that may be the option that emerges."

Ms. Clark said the exact shape of the election was still unclear.

"I believe the people have spoken today that they want change and I will do my best to see that it happens," she said, adding she would telephone Mr. Peters and Alliance leader Jim Anderson.

"I'm feeling positive, there has been a groundswell for Labour through the campaign. I am thrilled by that."



New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger checks his voting paper before casting his vote in his electorate of Taranaki/King Country in Te Kuiti Saturday (Reuters photo)

FBI arrests 7 in alleged militia bomb plot

WASHINGTON (R) — FBI agents Friday arrested seven West Virginia militia members or sympathisers on charges of plotting to blow up the Bureau's fingerprint records complex and transporting explosive materials.

It said more than 100 law enforcement officers executed the arrests in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania and carried out search warrants in five places after a 16-month investigation into the leader of the West Virginia mountaineer militia.

The arrests marked the latest in a series of episodes involving militant anti-government groups dating back to 1995.

The FBI said the inquiry involving Floyd Raymond Looker, the West Virginia militia's self-described "commanding general," focused on his alleged efforts to obtain explosives and to damage the Bureau's national fingerprint records complex, which is located in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Also arrested was James Rogers, 40, a Clarksburg fire department lieutenant

who allegedly provided photographs of construction blueprints of the FBI building to the militia.

Federal agents were able to infiltrate the group through the use of a cooperating witness, who was a close associate of Looker, and also had a confidential source. In addition, an undercover FBI agent met with Looker on Sept. 19, 1996.

The agent was posing as a "broker" who sold information to an unnamed middle eastern terrorist group, according to court documents. Mr. Looker agreed to provide the agent with the blueprints of the FBI complex for \$50,000 in cash, with the transfer to take place within 30 days.

Federal officials said the exchange occurred right before the arrest of Mr. Looker, who was carrying two handguns.

Besides the FBI complex, Mr. Looker also discussed targeting two other unidentified federal facilities in West Virginia "in the event of conflict with the federal government in the future,"

according to the court documents.

"Today's arrests culminate an intensive investigation that identifies efforts by individuals associated with the mountaineer militia to illegally possess, transport interstate and sell explosives and commit illegal actions in furtherance of a future act of destruction against an FBI facility," FBI agent John O'Connor said.

"The FBI mission includes the responsibility to investigate individuals who illegally plan destructive acts against government facilities," he said in a statement issued at a West Virginia news conference.

Mr. Looker, who has previously said he makes his living as a preacher and a lawyer, ran for West Virginia's legislature and county magistrate, but was defeated.

Clarksburg city council member Jim Hunt said, "Mr. Looker has been a kind of gadfly in this area. Any one who has met him knows of his credibility, which is none."

There have been a number

of recent high-profile cases with direct or indirect associations to private militia groups.

Timothy McVeigh, a Gulf war veteran who has been linked to right-wing militia groups, and his army buddy Terry Nichols have been charged with the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building that claimed the lives of 168 people.

The FBI in June negotiated the end of a long standoff with the anti-government freemen group, which had been holed up on a Montana ranch.

The last major militia case occurred in July, when federal authorities charged 12 members of an Arizona group with conspiring to blow up federal and local government buildings in the Phoenix area.

Besides Looker and Rogers, the FBI identified those arrested as Terrell Coon, 46, of Waynesburg, Pennsylvania; James Johnson, 48, of Maple Heights, Ohio; Iman Lewis, 26, of Cleveland; Edward Moore, 52, of Lavalette, West Virginia; and Jack Phillips, 57, of Fairmont, West Virginia.

Chechen separatist leader stands firm on independence

MOSCOW (R) — Chechnya's separatist leader said in an interview published Saturday that the devastated region would need decades to recover from its conflict with Moscow but would not drop its demands for independence at any cost.

"I fear that not everyone in Russia understands that after suffering such casualties in the fight for freedom, we will never — and not for any financing — give that freedom up," Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev told the Russian newspaper Izvestia.

Most fighting has stopped in the north Caucasus region under a peace agreement signed on Aug. 31 setting out terms for a ceasefire, a withdrawal of Russian troops and a five-year delay in settling Chechnya's political status.

But some Russian politicians say the agreement amounts to capitulation by Moscow, have criticised se-

curity chief Alexander Lebed for signing it and made clear they believe Chechnya is still part of Russia.

Mr. Yandarbiyev appeared to brush aside a statement by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin last Tuesday ruling out full independence for Chechnya. Mr. Chernomyrdin told parliament "the provisions of Russia's constitution are not up for bargaining."

Mr. Yandarbiyev has said talks with Mr. Chernomyrdin in Moscow a week ago confirmed the peace deal and were successful.

But he told Izvestia: "In our relations with Russia, especially in written documents, we proceed from the basis that the Chechen Republic is an independent state — a subject of international law, even if not recognised as such."

Mr. Yandarbiyev, who became the separatists' leader after his predecessor Dzhokhar Dudayev was reported

killed in a rocket attack last April, said a difficult winter lay ahead.

"We face a very tough winter. It will take decades to recover from this war," he said in the interview, conducted in Chechnya.

He said \$140 billion was needed to rebuild Chechnya, where many schools, homes, hospitals and roads had been destroyed in the almost 21-month conflict. There is no independent confirmation of such a figure.

Mr. Yandarbiyev said about 100,000 people had been killed in the conflict, most of them civilians.

Gen. Lebed said earlier this month that from 80,000 to 100,000 people had been killed. Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov, a fierce critic of the security chief, puts the dead at 18,500 and has said the figure of 100,000 is "a conscious lie."

President Boris Yeltsin, who is in a sanatorium waiting for a heart operation, has backed Gen. Lebed over the peace agreement but said much remains to be done to ensure peace.

Mr. Kulikov's dispute with Gen. Lebed is a clear sign of the divisions in Moscow over the peace deal, which many members of parliament says consists of humiliating unilateral concessions to the outnumbered and outgunned rebels.

Gen. Lebed defended the deal, despite jeers and heckling in parliament, saying it "put an end to something that could bring shame" on Russia for years.

He said the deferral in settling Chechnya's status was needed to calm down hostilities on both sides, restore the region's economy and make its leaders more inclined to stay with Russia.

Gen. Lebed is due to address a closed parliamentary hearing on Chechnya Tuesday.

China wants Japanese 'action' on disputed islands

TOKYO (AFP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen demanded Saturday that Japan take "practical action" to settle territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, Jiji Press said.

"To my regret, the Japanese side's wrong acts on the history and the Diaoyu islands have brought about serious trouble to Japan-China relations," Jiji's dispatch from Beijing quoted Mr. Qian as saying.

"The Japanese side needs to take practical action and correct the mistakes in order to bring the bilateral relations back to the right path," he said in a written reply to questions from visiting Japanese journalists.

Mr. Qian's remarks came amid a growing row over the islands which flared up in July when a Japanese nationalist group erected a lighthouse on one of the islands, known as Diaoyu in Chinese and Senkaku in Japanese. The island chain, though to be rich in minerals, is claimed by China, Japan and Taiwan.

Sino-Japanese relations have also been soured by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's visit to a controversial war shrine.

Mr. Hashimoto celebrated his 59th birthday on July 29 with a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo which commemorates Japan's war dead, including some convicted World War II criminals.

Mr. Qian noted Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda had last month "made it clear that Japan deeply regrets the past history of aggression and that the government will not approve the political group's action on the islands."

"We hope the Japanese side will keep their promise and carry out what they said," the Chinese leader said.

Mr. Qian met Mr. Ikeda in New York in late September, and complained that Japan had failed to stop the nationalists erecting the lighthouse. The right-wing group has been seeking government recognition of the lighthouse as an "official beacon."

"We hope that the Japanese side will fully acknowledge the importance of this issue and will not cause more trouble on the islands," Mr. Qian said.

Mr. Qian also proposed that China and Japan jointly develop marine resources around the islands for the sake of "the peace and stability" in the region, while shelving territorial claims.

Loyalist leaders plead for Northern Irish truce to hold

BELFAST (R) — Pro-British loyalist politicians made impassioned pleas to their guerrilla allies Saturday to heed a widespread yearning for Northern Irish peace and keep alive a shaky two-year truce.

"It is important for the Loyalist paramilitaries to pay attention to what the people are saying... The people don't want a return to Loyalist violence," Gusto Spence, the acknowledged "elder statesman" of loyalist politics, told Reuters.

Fears of a breakdown of the Protestant militants' ceasefire have persisted since their Catholic-supported IRA foes switched a bombing war from mainland Britain to the province last Monday, killing a soldier and wounding 30 other people.

The Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC), which rules over four outlawed bands who matched an IRA truce with their own on Oct. 13, 1994, met Friday to consider the ceasefire's future, according to Loyalist sources.

The sources refused to speculate on whether a statement would be issued or what decision the CLMC would make.

But the Belfast Morning

Irish news forecast "Loyalists to hold the line on ceasefire", quoting unidentified sources.

Alarmed at the prospect of a slide into sectarian warfare, political leaders in Britain, Ireland and the United States have implored the Loyalists to maintain their truce.

"We have done all that we possibly can do in order to maintain the ceasefire, to tell the paramilitaries not to recommence violence," said Spence, 63, a former guerrilla who is now a leader of the political arm of a Protestant extremist group.

"The IRA (Irish Republican Army) have done all in their power to blow the Loyalist ceasefire sky high."

"As the Loyalist paramilitaries are, as they say, an army of the people, let the people decide — and the people at this point in time say we want no violence from Loyalist paramilitaries," he added.

Mr. Spence was the man chosen by the CLMC to announce its historic truce to a euphoric Northern Ireland in 1994.

Loyalists had killed hundreds of Catholics in a battle to thwart the IRA's aim of breaking British rule and

the twin ceasefires seemed to signal a fresh start after a 25-year war which claimed 3,200 lives.

The IRA resumed hostilities last February, with the first of a string of bombs in London. Monday's attack, a double car bomb blast inside Britain's military garrison at Lisburn, south of Belfast, was the first in the province for more than two years.

Mr. Spence, speaking before the annual conference of his progressive Unionist Party, the political wing of the illegal Ulster volunteer force, said: "My hopes are that the Loyalist paramilitaries will hold the line. That the IRA will see that the violence is not going to get them anywhere..."

His sentiments were echoed by other DUP leaders. Billy Hutchinson, one of its chief spokesmen, said: "What I would say to them (Loyalist guerrillas) is listen to what the people are saying..."

"People in the (Catholic) Nationalist Community have told Sinn Fein and the IRA that they don't want (violence). We must listen to our people... I am asking the Loyalist paramilitaries — don't go back."

Japanese opposition leader is confident of election win

SHIZUOKA, Japan (R) — Japan's main opposition leader said Saturday momentum was building for his party to win the Oct. 20 general elections and dismissed speculation that poor health would stop him from becoming prime minister.

Ichiro Ozawa, who heads the main opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), sounded an optimistic note that his party would secure a majority in the 500-seat lower house of parliament after the general elections and take over the government.

Under a new electoral system, 300 seats in the lower house will be chosen from first-past-the-post districts and the other 200 by proportional representation on regional lists.

Mr. Ozawa, the biggest rival of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, said he expected his party to win more than one third of the 200 proportional representation seats and more than half the 300 seats in single-seat constituencies.

"Momentum is building and we will win the Oct. 22 general elections," the 54-year-old Ozawa told a news conference in the hot-spring resort city of Shizuoka, 180 kilometres south-west of Tokyo.

Although a record 1,503 candidates are contesting the 500 seats, Shinshinto and Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) are the only parties fielding enough candidates to capture a clear majority.

But most pundits predict neither group will do so and will be forced to seek a coalition partner. Mr. Ozawa, who has a history of heart problems, dismissed speculation that if Shinshinto won the elections, he would not agree to be the prime minister.

"If we win the elections and I don't have a heart attack, I will be the next prime minister of Japan," he said.

In 1991, Mr. Ozawa suffered a minor heart attack, stayed out of the public eye for months, and turned down pressing offers to contest the premiership.

"Since then he has been carefully looking after his health," Mr. Ozawa's aide said. During his stumping tour Saturday, Mr. Ozawa refused to see visitors before 9 a.m. and unfailingly took a one-hour nap after lunch, the aide said.

Mr. Ozawa, better known as a backroom strategist and blunt-speaking reformer, took over leadership of Shinshinto late last year while Hashimoto became prime minister in January.

Emerging as one of Japan's most powerful politicians, Mr. Ozawa led a mass defection from the LDP three years ago to bring about its downfall for the first time in 38 years.

Speaking before hundreds of voters in Shizuoka Saturday, Mr. Ozawa blamed the Hashimoto government for its half-hearted attempt to bring the economy back on track and streamline the bureaucracy.

"Things are in bad shape in Japan. Things are worse than people think," Mr. Ozawa told a crowd of 500 voters. "If you do not solve these things now, Japan will be in terrible shape at the start of the 21st century," he said.

Last week, Mr. Ozawa unveiled plans to dish out 18 trillion yen (\$162 billion) in tax cuts by halving income and residents taxes and by trimming corporate taxes to 40 per cent from the current 50 per cent.

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Limit to tax fungibility

THERE IS a great deal of talk these days, some of which attributed to senior officials, that the country is on the verge of substituting income tax with an increase in sales tax. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour floated this new line of thinking in an address last week to the Association of Income Tax Experts who have painstakingly outlined the deficiencies in the current taxation system. The thrust of the government's thoughts on the idea rests on both a fact and a fallacy. The fact is that revenues from income tax amount only to JD150 million per annum, a mere three per cent of the JD5 billion gross national product (GNP). Where Dr. Ensour's argument goes wrong though is when he claims that additional increases in the sales tax would not constitute additional burdens on the poor who, he admits, constitute the bulk of the country's consumers.

It is true that revenues from income tax do not represent more than three per cent of the GNP or 10 per cent of the budget. But this is no excuse to argue that income tax is not an efficient or credible way of earning revenues to the Treasury. By Dr. Ensour's admission, other states, especially the developed countries, still rely on income tax for the bulk of their revenues, amounting to as much as 30 per cent of their GNP. If we fail to bring in huge amounts of revenues from income tax, as many developed countries do, it is no fault of income taxation per se but the fault of our national tax collecting system.

On the other hand, when we say that most of Jordanian consumers are impoverished, how can we say in the same breath that a dramatic hike in the sales tax will not add to their miseries and hardships? It is a known fact that income tax normally targets the rich, including major corporations and industrial giants. Jordanians who still live below the poverty line do not pay much income tax anyway because they have little or no income to be taxed. So who are we trying to protect when we submit that income tax should be phased out and sales tax increased when the poor in our midst make up the bulk of the consumer sector?

If the government, however, has in mind replacing customs duties with sales tax, then we are talking about another subject altogether. Customs duties are payable on so-called luxury goods like cars which only members of the upper middle class and the rich can afford to purchase. We suppose that it is defensible to augment sales tax on such products in return for lowering customs duties. This way the coffers of the state would take with one hand what they give up by the other, a financial acrobatic that is fully transparent and can fool nobody. Provided we do not end up increasing the direct or indirect tax burdens on the majority of the people who can ill-afford to pay them, the government is free to experiment with any tax system that has proven its worth and fairness in other societies, especially those which have acquired a more sophisticated experience in tax policies. Other than that we should reflect more deeply on our tax system before we adopt controversial methods that have not been tried with much success elsewhere.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE BEIT Hanoun talks between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have ended with no result, despite American prodding, largely due to Israel's intransigent stand with regard to the question of redeployment of its forces in Hebron and its commitments to carry out the other provisions of the Oslo agreement, said Al Ra'i in an editorial Saturday. The crisis persists and could never be solved by the mere announcement that the two sides will resume their talks at Taba and Eilat, the daily added. The double-standard policies of the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, who is telling the world that Israel is committed to the peace process but contradicts this announcement by facts on the ground, can by no means end the Arab and world's pressure on Israel, according to the paper. Not only has the pressure on Mr. Netanyahu come from the Arab countries, most prominently Jordan, but the Israeli government has been strongly criticised by the Israeli political groups, the Israeli media and even the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, in addition to the European nations, the paper continued.

ISRAEL'S VIOLATION of commitments and its retreat from the peace process did not happen only on the Israeli-Palestinian track but also on the Jordanian-Israeli track as Israel has disregarded the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty which provided for Jordan to have a special role in the holy places of Jerusalem and did not keep its pledge to supply Jordan with 50 million cubic metres of water annually, according to Taher Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour. This Israeli retreat means also freezing the work of a regional committee on the refugees displaced since the 1967 war and the other committees on disarmament, water, the environment and economic development, said the writer. Mr. Netanyahu's policies, he said, are clearly directed against Egypt, Syria, Lebanon as well as the Palestinians and Jordan, at a time when the world watches the Jewish state massing troops and weapons in the northern regions in preparation for another aggression on the Arab Nation, said the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Poverty can be alleviated by high economic growth

ALTHOUGH WE do not agree on a definition or exact measurement of poverty, the term is understood and frequently used as a political tool by both government officials and opposition leaders.

Until 1950, poverty was not an issue in Jordan, simply because the vast majority of the population was poor. Agriculture, which generates now around 7 per cent of income in Jordan, used to make up around 70 per cent in the 1940s, although the volume of agricultural output was not higher in relative terms or in absolute figures.

Poverty started to draw growing attention during the last decade or so. The first survey of poverty in Jordan was undertaken by the government during 1987-1988, the results of which were published in 1989. For the first time, the survey determined the lines of absolute and abject poverty in Jordan.

This pioneering study was conducted by an excellent team of experts and specialists, chosen from the ministries of social affairs, planning, and labour, the Department of Statistics, the Royal Scientific Society, Noor Al Hussein Foundation, the Social Security Corporation, University of Jordan, the Union of Charity Societies, and experts from the private sector. It was based on a large sample of 15,000 families, to guarantee a 99 per cent degree of confidence.

The salient results of this extensive survey was that an income of JD 15 a month for the individual, or JD 89 for

the family, is the line of absolute poverty, while the line of abject poverty was placed at JD 40.5 per month per family (dinars are of course of 1987 purchasing power). The survey found that 17.2 per cent of the population at the time were absolutely poor, while 1.5 per cent lived in abject poverty, a total of 18.7 per cent of the population.

The study was repeated in the aftermath of the 1989 economic crisis and the Gulf crisis and war of 1990-1991 using the same methodology after adjusting the minimum income to reflect the higher cost of living. It was no surprise that poverty was found to have expanded to 21.3 per cent, including 6 per cent in extreme poverty.

This study was updated in mid-1993, following the substantial increases in the salaries of civil and military service personnel and the government retirees. The update established that the line of poverty declined from 21.3 per cent to 18.3 per cent, slightly lower than it used to be in 1987.

In the absence of more recent surveys we assume that the current line of poverty in Jordan ranges at around 18 per cent, while abject poverty must have declined further because the National Assistance Fund has expanded to reach around 5 per cent of the poorest segment of society with cash subsidies, which are enough to elevate beneficiaries to above the line of abject poverty while remaining below the line of absolute poverty.

Reasons underlying poverty in Jordan are many. Among them are: the near absence of natural resources, except for phosphate and potash, the high population growth rate, the influx of refugees, displaced, and returnees, the weak productive sector where manufacturing industries do not employ more than 10 per cent of the labour force, the heavy burden of external indebtedness, the slashing of the dinar's value in half (1989), the economic recession in the Gulf states in the eighties, the sharp reduction in Arab financial aid, the impact of the second Gulf crisis and war, the strict implementation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programme and the unfair distribution of income.

With its limited resources, the government took measures to alleviate poverty by direct and indirect means, including: safety nets to secure the minimum needs, including free education in government schools, free medical services in public sector hospitals and clinics, appropriating more funds to the National Assistance Fund, and the Development and Employment Fund, over and above the activities of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Queen Alia Fund, and some 650 special voluntary societies.

However, the real solution to the acute problem of poverty is high economic growth, which can come about through new investments to generate jobs. In the meantime, the needy groups of the society need help.

Television and wars — 'if it bleeds, it leads'

By Gwynne Dyer

THE PICTURES coming out of Kabul some time ago only strengthen our impression that the world is dissolving into violence and chaos. The television images overpower any rational analysis suggesting that war is in decline, and the media do not strive officiously to put matters in perspective.

The Afghan capital falls, and former President Najibullah is beaten, dragged behind a jeep, and shot in the head. His corpse is strung up in public, his mouth, nose, hands and pockets stuffed with cigarettes and banknotes. The youthful new rulers of the city announce that henceforth all girls' schools will be closed, all women must quit their jobs, all men in government employment must grow long beards. Clearly, the barbarians are at the gates.

The Pakistan newspaper "Dawn" primly observed that "public hangings or other such acts of vengeance will only provide further encouragement to critics of political

Islam who let no opportunity pass without equating Muslim militancy with blood-letting and terrorism." True enough, but that rather misses the point. This sort of savagery is not exclusive to Muslim extremists.

In war-torn Sierra Leone, one of the militias took to chopping off people's arms at random earlier this year: terrorism gone mad. In Sri Lanka last month, as government troops closed in on the Tamil Tiger headquarters at Kilinochchi, Tamil rebels rigged as human bombs launched a mass attack on the column. As soon as night falls in the hills of Burundi, the reciprocal massacres of Hutu and Tutsi villagers by the two tribes' army and guerrilla forces resume.

Surely the world is drowning in a tidal wave of violence. Surely the pundits who see ethnic hatreds and religious fanaticism as the driving forces of the post-cold war world are right. Surely the television is right.

No. Television has a very small screen, so even the smallest of wars fills it

completely. It is what Marshall McLuhan called a "linear" medium, which means that only a very few, genocides, etc. will entirely fill its limited space for foreign news. And since every TV news editor in the world lives by the axiom "if it bleeds, it leads" news of war comes first.

The result is that most of the world's people live with the paranoid delusion that while things are pretty safe around here, the rest of the world is a bloody mess. Even the print media often succumb to this delusion, but at least in print rational analysis stands a fighting chance of competing with the pictures. So let us do some.

Ten years ago, there were a lot of large wars under way in the world. "Large", for these purposes, means at least ten dead a day; or let us say 4,000 dead a year.

Some of those wars, like Guatemala, Lebanon, Namibia, Eritrea and Cambodia, were already over a decade old in 1986. Others, like Sri Lanka, the Punjab, Iran vs. Iraq, Afghanistan and El

Salvador, were relatively recent. But they all tended to last a long time. They were generally internal to one country, and they usually killed more civilians than soldiers.

The remainder of the list included the long war in the southern Philippines and the even longer war in the southern Sudan; the wars in Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique and Nicaragua; and (just squeaking in under the wire as a "large" war) the conflict in Western Sahara. A total of eighteen big wars, only ten years ago.

All but four of those wars are now over. The wars in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, the southern Sudan, and Somalia continue, but the former two show clear signs of an approaching end. And apart from sub-Saharan Africa, the only new war of a comparable scale that is raging today is the fundamentalist insurgency in Algeria.

There was a rash of short wars in the southern fringes of the former Communist empire in 1992-96, as inextricably

tangled ethnic groups living in mostly mountainous terrain sorted out their post-imperial relationships: Croatia, Bosnia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia vs. Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Tajikistan. Two of those wars, Bosnia and Chechnya, certainly qualified as "large" at their height. But all of them are now over, or at least in long-term remission.

There are other conflicts in the world that we also call wars: Northern Ireland, Corsica, and Spain's Basque provinces in Europe. Peru's Sendero Luminoso and Mexico's Zapatistas/EPR in Latin America; East Timor and Kashmir in Asia. But these insurgencies kill an average of only one person a day, or one person a week, which makes them a qualitatively different phenomenon. Besides, most of them are in decline — and most of them were already under way ten years ago anyway.

This leaves only black Africa, where there have been big new wars in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The latter two wars may now be

ending, but the twin Hutu Tutsi struggles in Rwanda and Burundi, though well below the genocidal level of last year, continue to take a heavy toll.

The rise in wars in the middle belt of Africa is deeply worrisome, above all to Africans, but the overall conclusion is clear. Worldwide, warfare is in steep decline. From eight teen large wars a decade ago, we are down to nine today. And if we omit the middle belt of Africa, we are down to three, which two may soon end.

Ninety-five per cent of the world's people do not live in the middle belt of Africa. Over ninety per cent of the world's people have never even seen war, except on television. Around three-quarters of the world's people do not live in places at least a thousand kilometres from the nearest large war.

The world is not falling apart. It is more peaceful than at any time in the past half-century. Universal brotherhood will not arrive any time soon, but the television lies. It can not help it.

'The road to peace looks longer than ever'

By David Grossman

HOW HARD it is to create something new in this world, and how easy it is to destroy it. It took only a few hours to demolish the delicate web of relations that had been woven between Palestinians and Israelis after 100 years of animosity. Of what was that web made? Of the most abstract things: much good will on both sides, war fatigue and, especially, the maturity and readiness of some great leaders, who in the wisdom of age were able to rise above their fears, and rebel against their own mentalities.

During the past two years we were able to begin to speculate on how real peace between Israel and its neighbours might look. Peace, I emphasise, not love. But then who looks for love, between nations? The main thing is the change in categories of feeling and thinking: it suddenly became clear, to the surprise of many Palestinians and Israelis, that if you cast aside your stereotypes and see the enemy as a human being, you discover that he is a person like yourself. It turned out that a person — and a nation — could decide it was no longer prepared to continue to be the victim of a stagnant view of the world, of a narrow interpretation of its own history. Maybe that sounds banal, but the events of this week show to what extent all of us in this region are the slaves of those stereotypes and how much the use of force is our mother tongue.

The opportunity for peace revealed to us that you do not have to live every part of your life in the dichotomous framework of "victim or master." The three years since the signing of the Oslo agreement instilled in Israelis and Palestinians the feeling of freedom, of the beginning of a long-recovery. Here and there

new ties were made — economic, cultural, even military. A routine of working together began, and mechanisms were created that succeeded, with great discernment, through a process of mutual education, in liquidating foci of opposition to peace. New personal friendships were established. Let me give one small example: when more than 50 Israelis were murdered last February in suicide attacks by Hamas extremists, a Palestinian friend called me from Ramallah and offered to donate blood to the wounded.

The process has been difficult and bitter and bloody. Most Israelis, and most Palestinians, are still a long way from the lofty, hopeful feeling I described. In fact, the concessions that Oslo forced both sides to make led to more anxiety for many, and to a sense that the other side was tricking them. These people were pushed one more, decisive step towards the brink.

The Oslo agreement of 1994 reflects this ambivalence. Only at first glance was it a "peace of the brave," as Arafat termed it. Anyone who read the agreements and examined the maps understood that the bravery had been enough only to break down the psychological barriers, but not to create a deep and fundamental change in relations between the two peoples. The agreement — which provided for leaving Israeli settlements where they were and which hacked the West Bank into a checkerboard of detours and roadblocks and areas of Israeli control — didn't have much of a chance from the start.

I want to believe that a rational and flexible government — like the Rabin-Peres administration in its later stages — would have been smart enough to repair the flaws in the agreement while continuing the process, in the hope that the

majority of Israelis would, slowly, recognise the great blessing that real peace could bring. The greatness of Rabin and Peres was that at a certain point (not at the beginning of the process) they defined for themselves the final goal — true peace — and decided to ignore all the obstacles along the way to it, including disturbing violations by the Palestinians, and the temptations of the use of force. Israel's traditional way of communicating with the Arabs.

Netanyahu has a different final goal, one that is becoming nauseatingly clear as time goes on. Of course he wants peace. Who doesn't want peace? But everything he does indicates that he wants some sort of abstract peace, one without concessions, one without a partner. His virtual fantasy peace led us last week straight into a nightmare.

But the peace process created another new, decisive fact: Israel is today a part of the Middle East. After decades of conflict, several important Arab states came to understand that they had to accept Israel's presence. This was a huge achievement for Israel, one that makes real a dream that its leaders had always evoked. That dream carries a price tag — it requires that we grow up and start to act more responsibly. Israeli governments can no longer do whatever they like in the region and solve every problem by force of arms alone.

As long as Israel was entirely isolated here it allowed itself, sometimes with great justice, to treat all those around it as absolute enemies and to strike back with great force against any provocation. Today, Israel's ties with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians restrict and complicate its responses. Today Israel has a lot to lose in the Middle East. Worsening relations with the Palestinians

will lead to a tragic deterioration in relations with Egypt and Jordan. The reverse is also true — progress in one channel will strengthen others.

Under Netanyahu's leadership, Israel is being dragged again and again into impulsive and irresponsible actions. It is humiliating the Palestinians and treating them with contempt. Netanyahu played games of prestige for weeks before finally deigning to meet with the head of the Palestinian National Authority, as if only the Palestinians had an interest in such a meeting. One hundred days after the elections, Netanyahu is still refusing to honour Israel's signature on the Oslo agreement and to redeploy Israeli forces in Hebron, and government ministers are building more and more houses in the settlements and creating a situation that, perhaps, only a horrible war will be able to solve.

Netanyahu today represents all that is arrogant and belligerent in Israeli politics — those very traits we had just begun to recover from. This latest deterioration in the situation will, of course, lead his supporters to declare: "We told you — you can never trust the Arabs. We gave them guns and they're using them to kill us. Between us the sword will always rule." I, and those who think like me, also see in these events support for our opinions, but there is one decisive difference: we have already tried the way of conflict and battle, and we have discovered that violence leads to ruin. But the road to peace... that road we have but barely trodden. And today it looks longer and farther away than ever.

David Grossman is an Israeli novelist. His latest work is "The Book of Inimate Grammar." This article is reprinted from The Independent.

LETTERS

Better people

To the Editor:

SO GOOD to be back in Jordan after holidaying in Britain, even though central Amman already shows evidence of deteriorating into the need of pedestrian tunnels in order to cross its busy streets.

It was lovely to find the comparative peace of Aqaba with the sun and the sea.

Anyhow, it is back to work now, and I intend on laying the foundations of Jordan's Open University having had some measure of support promised for it, with its aim of providing a service throughout Jordan.

Jordanians gainfully employed in rearing a family in earlier years will be able to pursue studies and interests postponed for some time. This will also benefit the mental and physical health of the senior citizen student, and so improve the quality of later life.

The method used will be by establishing groups throughout the country, wherever the need is greatest, and by correspondence, centred in Aqaba, make it possible for capable older generations to pass down information to others wishing to benefit from such knowledge. The "teacher" will thus be anyone who can proudly put "exp" after his or her name, as having experienced a full life while the "student" anyone with a certain degree of maturity as to give them a wish to extend their knowledge further, particularly in balanced good health with which to exercise the greater knowledge.

My commitment to the aim will be complete and absolute until taken-over by others more capable than I in this beloved country. Meanwhile, I promise to reply to all correspondence received even though it may take some time, according to the volume. The telephone or any other means of communication would not have sufficient impact as to warrant such devotion I'm afraid. Furthermore, my particular qualification being in the field of health and fitness, I see Aqaba as being ideally situated, with its sea, shore, and sunshine, as to be the natural national venue for a modern health resort on its coral beach.

Our immediate aim has to be the betterment of the general health of Jordanians in total.

Paul Saint-Aqaba

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to take. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of letters.

Israel seeking sweeping changes to Hebron deal

(Continued from page 1)

sign off on all decisions by the Palestinian municipality over any services to Palestinian residents in PLO-controlled areas near settler enclaves.

The accord calls for Israel to hand over civil powers in all of Hebron except for those relating directly to Israelis and their property. The Hebron municipality is to provide services to both sides of the city.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who in May elections ousted the centre-left government that signed the accord, has said Israel will uphold agreements signed by the other government but that security measures must be increased.

Saeb Erakat, the chief Palestinian negotiator in the talks with Israel, meanwhile, accused Israel of playing a public relations game by publicising its willingness to carry out the Hebron withdrawal while in private demanding changes to the pullout plan.

"The Palestinians are simply asking for the agreements to be implemented but Israel is coming up with new demands at every meeting," he said.

"They are misleading people in the media, the Israeli side wants to change the agreement and this has prevented any progress," he said.

A leader of the outlawed Jewish extremist Kach movement warned in remarks broadcast on Saturday of an explosion if an

Israeli troop redeployment were carried out in Hebron.

"There are certain groups, particularly in Kiryat Arba, that are organising initiatives and I have been invited lately to gatherings very frequently (on this)," Baruch Merzel, told Israel Radio.

Kiryat Arba Jewish settlement adjacent to Hebron is home to 5,500 Israelis. One of them, Baruch Goldstein, shot dead at least 30 Palestinians at prayer in Hebron's Al Ibrahimi Mosque in February, 1994, before he was killed by survivors.

The anti-Arab Kach movement was outlawed after the massacre.

"I've warned in the past and I'm warning today that the territory is on the verge of explosion. I know that they're talking about practical organisation," Mr. Merzel said.

Mr. Merzel said there were plans to run settler patrols, to enter Arab neighbourhoods and "all sorts of things."

"Kiryat Arba, Hebron are not Gush Katif and Psagot. These are other people... we have a record of reaction to Arab provocations. We will not go like a herd of sheep to slaughter even if the government is a right-wing government," he said.

Gush Katif is the Jewish settlement area still under Israeli control in the Gaza Strip most of which Israel handed to Palestinian rule in 1994. Psagot is a Jewish settlement in the West Bank adjacent to Ramallah self-rule enclave.

Netanyahu says he now respects Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

"Arafat was a former enemy and as a human being I have feelings like anyone else but I spoke to him with respect (in September). I respect Arafat and there was mutual respect between us," Mr. Netanyahu told Orbis, an Arab television station.

The text of the interview was published in the Egyptian government newspaper Akhbar Al Yom.

Mr. Netanyahu, under hostile questioning from the interviewer, acknowledged that he had an image problem in the Arab World. "I know my image is that I am against the Arabs, against peace and against negotiations. But part of the effort we are making now is to overcome this image and move on to the facts," the prime minister said.

Pressed on what kind of future Palestinians could expect from negotiations with his government, Mr. Netanyahu offered them what appeared to be a limited version of local autonomy. "We can reach arrangements which guarantee

Palestinians complete freedom to run their lives... We want to let them run their institutions, their schools and their affairs, bring up their children and raise the coming generations," he said.

"What we want to do is preserve our security and the life of Israel... there must be a balance between the Palestinians' need for freedom and our need for security," he added.

Nablus welcomes Arafat
Palestinians in the Israeli-blockaded West Bank town of Nablus gave a rousing welcome on Saturday to Mr. Arafat.

"We sacrifice our blood and soul for you Abu Ammar," thousands chanted using Mr. Arafat's nom de guerre as his helicopter set down in the town still ringed by Israeli tanks deployed during Israeli-Palestinian clashes last month.

Mr. Arafat was to chair a joint meeting of the Palestinian National Authority's cabinet and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive.

Partial solar eclipse seen from Western Europe to Canada

(Continued from page 1)

Special telescopes at Milan University's department of mathematics attached to a personal computer transmitted images of the eclipse that were updated every 30 seconds to a web site set up by a company specialising in astro-

logical equipment. Three more eclipses are expected before the end of the decade: two partial ones, not visible in Europe, on March 9, 1997 and Feb. 26, 1998, and one total eclipse, visible in northern France, Germany, Turkey and India, scheduled for Aug. 11, 1999.

Threats

(Continued from page 1)

the diplomat "we'll eliminate all of you," Mr. Rifai said.

He said the Israeli authorities were taking the threats seriously and were intensifying security around the embassy which is located in the 17-storey seaside hotel in Tel Aviv.

Minister of Information Marwan Muasher told Al Ra'i that the Jordanian

authorities were following closely on the threats and that the security of Jordanian diplomats was a top priority.

Mr. Rifai said that Jordan was considering increasing security of the embassy and the diplomats.

Mr. Rifai said he could not identify who was behind the threats. "The callers could belong to any extremist group," he said.

Jordanian diplomats and staff at the Tel Aviv embassy number 26 including two securitymen.

Parties, unions and others urge strong Arab position

(Continued from page 1)

and shirking of their responsibilities in the face of this situation. "As the Palestine problem — with Jerusalem at its core — has encountered serious deterioration at the hands of Israeli governments. Disregard to the commitments and agreements concluded with the Jewish state did not take more than a mere change of government in Israel. Attempts to return history and man to the ages of myth and primitive legends and to rebuild what is called the third temple in place of Al Aqsa Mosque are alien to this age.

"For all these reasons, and with a view to placing matters in their right perspective, the political parties, trade and professional unions, political and popular groups and economic institutions in Jordan organised a series of meetings to follow up on the recent developments and the bloody confrontations that led to the martyrdom of tens of Palestinian Arab people and the injury of hundreds of others in heroic confrontations with the occupation forces.

"We would like to assert the following:

— Solid faith and belief in the Palestinian link in view of their common affiliation, common interests and destiny, rendering the Jordanian and Palestinian national security as a united one.

— Assertion of the Arab and Islamic character of Jerusalem, its religious and political status. The city holds the third holiest shrine for Muslims and one which is held sacred by Muslims and Christians from around the world as it holds the Dome of the Rock and the Church of Holy Sepulchre. Jerusalem is the capital of the Arab Palestinian independent state and constitutes an integral part of the Arab lands occupied by Israel since 1967. There can be no political solution without Jerusalem.

— Reaffirmation that any peaceful solution should restore the rights of the Arab people and should place the

peoples and countries of this region back on the track of construction and security.

"After the Madrid peace conference some people believed in the possibility of reconciliation between the occupying forces on the one hand and the legitimate and natural owners of Palestine and other Arab countries on the other based on the principle of exchanging land-for-peace. But it has become clear that Israel has not abandoned its Zionist project and its doctrine. Israel's goals are the usurpation of more land, more repression, more arrogance, more discrimination and more eviction of Arabs from their homeland in addition to expansion of Jewish settlements and desecration of shrines. Security which Israel brags about can never be realised for the Jewish state except with the achievement of genuine peace. Security is the fruit of peace and not the vice versa.

— Emphasis on the need for the Palestinians to cling to their rights to return and determine their destiny and the right to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. These are inalienable rights which should be seen in their entirety.

— Emphasis on the need to consider the Aqsa Intifada as the beginning of a pan-Arab national action within the framework of a sound Arab strategy that unifies Arab countries' stands and rank as to rise to a level in which they are able to protect their rights in their territory, safeguard their dignity and ensure their freedom and progress, backed by a parallel pan-Islamic action.

— Assertion that the construction of the aspired unified Arab stand will serve as the effective level to boost the Palestinian potentials so that the Palestinian people can be strong enough to confront the Israeli occupation. Assertion also on linking the Arab World

with the Palestine problem which is an essential move that tolerates no further delay or procrastination. Assertion that the Arabs must absorb and deal with the new strategic developments at the regional and international levels something which requires a pooling of pan Arab efforts and the return to the pan-Arab national course of action.

"Based on the above reasons: — We call for an Arab summit to rebuild a united Arab and integrated stand in the face of the Israel's adamant policies.

— We call on the Arab and Islamic governments which signed agreements with Israel or those that deal with the Jewish state to reconsider their relations with that state in light of Israel's current practices and policies towards our Arab Palestinian people.

"We call on the Arab masses to resist all forms of normalisation with the Zionist enemy and to refrain from opening Arab markets for Israeli goods.

"We call on the Arab and Islamic people to support the Palestinian people's struggle against the Israeli occupation, settlement programmes, eviction of Arab people from their homeland and the closure of the Palestinian lands. We call for political, economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians to strengthen their steadfastness.

"We condemn the stand of the United States, the sponsor of the peace process, for its continued bias towards Israel against Arab rights. We also condemn the American policy which gives no regard to the Arab and Palestinian blood and which continues to shirk its international responsibilities in providing protection to the principles of right and justice.

"We deeply appreciate the European countries' stands in general and those of France and Russia in particular as they back the principles of justice for the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom and independence.

"In order to raise the popular and official stands to a national level that meets the seriousness in the Israeli intransigence, in a show of respect of the sacrifices of the Palestinian people, in conformity with the Jordanian national role vis-a-vis our nation's causes and the Kingdom's struggle and sacrifices in support of the Palestinian cause, and in recognition of the blending of the Jordanian and Palestinian blood over the ages, we have signed this statement and consider ourselves as a permanent committee to follow up on the events and undertake action in pursuit of national duty and pan-Arab responsibilities."

Signatories of the statement were 19 political parties, 13 professional unions, the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions, the Amman Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Jordanian Businessmen Association, the Association of Banks in Jordan, the Jordanian Trade Association, the Federation of Jordanian Insurance Companies, Jordanian and Arab writers associations, Women associations, and charitable and philanthropic and non-governmental organisations operating in Jordan.

Support for the King
Also on Saturday five leading politicians sent a cable to His Majesty King Hussein in support of his position vis-a-vis the Israeli government.

"Your firm and courageous stand vis-a-vis the obstinate Israeli leadership and its persistence to ruin all the good efforts were received with deep satisfaction in our conscience and minds," said the cable.

"As we have expressed support for your wise and brave steps towards a just and comprehensive peace, we are now standing by you and back your ideas which reflect the feelings of the Jordanian people and the world at large," the cable said.

Bread price could be reduced

(Continued from page 1)

declining. This step, Mr. Sobar added, is based on building a strategic wheat reserve in case of any further price fluctuation.

Since the bread price hikes, flour consumption

dropped 34 per cent which is equivalent to 240,000 tonnes of wheat a year.

Before the hikes, Jordan's wheat imports reached 660,000-680,000 tonnes a year. Jordan imported 360,000 tonnes of wheat in the first nine months of this year.

Mubarak rejects Israeli complaint

(Continued from page 1)

not, the press in Egypt enjoys complete freedom, like the press in Israel, which also attacks us," he said. "I cannot stop the press because the law and the constitution do not give me the right to do that."

"But I would like the press to keep away from base expressions," the president added. Egypt's biggest newspapers are national institutions and the government appoints editors favourable to its point of view. The other newspapers, owned and run by opposition parties, can say what they like about Israeli leaders and are often those most hostile to Israeli policies.

All Egyptian newspapers regularly describe Mr. Netanyahu using adjectives such as stupid, arrogant and deceitful.

As an example of hostile press coverage, Israeli newspapers on Friday reprinted a photo from the private newspaper Al Dustour, depicting Mr. Netanyahu with a large Swastika on his forehead and a moustache like Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

Al Dustour is written by Egyptians, printed in Cyprus and subject to government censorship when it enters Egypt.

Mr. Mubarak repeated that Egypt welcomed a European role in making Middle East peace, as long as it was in coordination with the dominant U.S. role.

"We don't want disharmony, in which the cause would be the loser. Europe

has a role but that doesn't dispense with the U.S. role, because that is fundamental," he said.

Mr. Mubarak also said on Saturday that he told Mr. Netanyahu the two leaders would not meet until Israel reaches a solution with the Palestinians on the West Bank town of Hebron.

Mr. Mubarak said he informed Mr. Netanyahu of his position on Oct. 4, just after the Middle East summit in Washington.

Mr. Mubarak had declined to go to the summit, on the grounds that it was clear that Mr. Netanyahu did not want to make progress.

Mr. Mubarak said that in a telephone conversation on Oct. 4, Mr. Netanyahu briefed him on the Washington agreement to hold more meetings between the Israelis and the Palestinians on an Israeli troop redeployment in Hebron.

"Netanyahu said: 'You'll see within a week or 10 days, I'll solve something on Hebron,'" Mr. Mubarak said.

"And I said: 'Solve Hebron and I'll meet you. Short of that I won't be able to.' If he does a redeployment and adheres to the agreement, then he's welcome," he added.

"The situation is still complicated. There's no (Israeli) commitment to what was agreed," he said.

It was not fully clear if Mr. Mubarak's refusal to see Mr. Netanyahu still stood.

Mr. Mubarak will meet Israeli President Ezer Weizman on Monday.

Netanyahu does not seem to have received Jordan's message yet

(Continued from page 1)

not listen to Jordan and showed little understanding of the nature of politics in the Middle East.

Initially Jordan gave the Israeli government a chance to come to grips with the way the Arabs think in light of the little or even non-existent experience members of the current government have had with the Arabs.

During the visits that Dore Gold, Mr. Netanyahu's political advisor, made to Jordan in late September, "we tried to explain to him how things work" and to bring the points of view of the Israelis and the Palestinians closer.

But that did not seem to work, said an official. Mr. Gold left Jordan to

surprise the Kingdom the next day with illegal decisions. The first was concerning settlements and the second was concerning the tunnel. Mr. Gold failed to inform Jordan about the decision to open it when he was here one day earlier.

That looked bad for Jordan and could have given the impression that the Kingdom was in agreement with the Israeli moves. And when enough time elapsed and Mr. Netanyahu showed no sign of change, pushing the whole peace process to the edge of the abyss, Jordan rang the alarm bells about the danger of the Israeli policies.

While the opening of the tunnel in Jerusalem was the Israeli action that sparked the crisis, the crisis with the Israeli government is over its refusal to implement the

agreements it has reached with the Palestinians.

What is even more alarming is the Israeli government's determination to renegotiate agreements that have already been signed. The implications of that was very alarming, said one official. If Israel wants to renegotiate the agreements with the Palestinians, what guarantees are there that it would not do the same with Jordan or other Arab countries with which it might reach agreements in the future?

"The agreements are with the state of Israel. Agreements should be sacred," the official said.

Jordan did not criticise Israel for the sake of causing a crisis, said the official. It did so out of concern for the peace process. "What we are saying is that we

want (the peace process) to move forward. It is true that there is a crisis. But this crisis must lead to pushing the process forward."

Jordan has stressed that it will not change its position unless Israel meets its demands. Its decision to receive Israeli President Ezer Weizman is to show that its problem is not with the relationship with Israel but with the policies of Mr. Netanyahu. Accordingly, and considering that Mr. Weizman has no executive power in Israel, his visit will be ceremonial.

But as far as receiving Israeli officials, Jordan will only do so if the visits are to lead to concrete results, said the official.

"We do not want words," he said, "we want action."

'Leak' to New York Times did not come from Jordan — official

(Continued from page 1)

man had obtained his information. But he called us to confirm the story and we were surprised to hear that it was leaked," the source said.

The sources said they believed the Americans shared Jordan's disappointment with the stand of Mr. Netanyahu but could not voice their views publicly due to internal and electoral considerations. "So it is possible that they resorted to this tactic to get the message across (to the Israelis)," one of the sources said.

The source said that the fact that there were other reports which said the Americans had not objected to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's absence from the Washington summit gives credence to the theory that the Americans leaked the account to the press.

Another theory that it was the Palestinians who leaked the story in light of the obvious satisfaction of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat with what the King told Mr. Netanyahu and the fact that some Palestinian

circles were talking about that before Friedman's account was published.

"The Palestinians were happy that the King was there to fend for them, especially that Mr. Mubarak was not there, and wanted what the King said to be made public," said another source. The official confirmed that the King was disappointed with Mr. Netanyahu's stands and the strength of his words show the seriousness with which the King looks at the dilemma to which Mr. Netanyahu's policies have pushed the peace process.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu had all spoken in when the King fixed his eyes on Mr. Netanyahu to the amazement of the three other leaders, Mr. Friedman reported.

Then "the King erupted: 'I am deeply disappointed. I am sure that you are too Mr. President. Maybe President Mubarak was right (not to attend the summit). Maybe he was perceptive. Prime Minister Netanyahu put on maximalist positions before coming here and he kept to them in letter and spirit. I expected we would

have done better'."

Mr. Friedman quoted "several sources" as saying that the King has at least expected that Mr. Netanyahu would have agreed to a target date for completing the Hebron negotiations and for the resumption of final status talks.

"All of this would have been very meaningful" the king continued, "it would have been good to stand alongside you and announce this. And I speak now for all those who love peace, for mothers and fathers, for my grandfather, for my great uncle who started the dialogue with the Zionist movement. I speak for myself and for Yitzhak Rabin, a man whom I had the great pride to call my friend. I speak for all the peoples who benefit from peace. All this goodwill is being lost. We are at the edge of the abyss, and regardless of our best efforts, we might be just about to fall into it — all of us," according to Mr. Friedman.

Mr. Friedman reported that the King said he did not know how much the Palestinians can take with little

chance to work.

"Then staring at Mr. Netanyahu, the King said: 'What we need, Sir, is not the arrogance of power, but the vision that Yitzhak Rabin had. Maybe one day you will have it. But today was a success for extremists and warmongers. I am very disappointed,'" according to Mr. Friedman's account.

The account said that the King also told Mr. Netanyahu that security cannot be achieved by and Israel's "Fortress mentality" and that it requires mutual respect. Terrorism is born out of despair, and without a greater willingness by Israel to give and take and see the big picture, terrorism will likely explode again, the King reportedly said.

Mr. Friedman said the King told Mr. Netanyahu that his efforts to reopen the Oslo agreement put in doubt everything that has been achieved.

The King urged Mr. Netanyahu to seize the moment but left the room "muttering that Netanyahu didn't get it," Mr. Friedman reported.

Krajnsnik refuses to sign allegiance

(Continued from page 1)

It would be a public rejection of the Serb's main war aim of dividing the country into separate ethnically-pure states with the Serb parts grafted onto neighbouring Serbia.

Mr. Kinkal had earlier asked that he meet all three men together. That meeting failed to go ahead. Instead he only talked with President Alija Izetbegovic and Kresimir Zubak, respectively the Muslim and Croat members of the presidency.

Mr. Krajnsnik, speaking on Bosnian Serb media later that he had been willing to sign the oath but that the location for the act was in dispute.

He said he could not sign in a building identified with the Muslim-Croat federation, the other entity along

with the Bosnian Serb Republic (RS) that makes up post-war Bosnia. He blamed Mr. Izetbegovic for rejecting a signing at the German embassy. "I have an obligation to protect the equality of the RS and of the Serb people, so there cannot be any bargain on these two issues," he told Serb media.

International irritation and pressure has been mounting in recent weeks with the Serbs' reluctance to commit themselves to working in Bosnia's new-style joint institutions elected in last month's general election.

Amid tight security Saturday, the Bosnian Serb leader ventured into the centre of Sarajevo for the first time since war broke out for the meeting with Mr. Kinkal and U.S. envoy John Kornblum.

Masood forces attack Taleban

(Continued from page 12)

back down or change its agenda in the face of any new coalition formed to combat the fighters who overran the Afghan capital two weeks ago.

The comments, which came after President Rabbani, Gen. Dostum and Mr. Khalili reportedly agreed to come to the aid of each other if any of them were attacked by the Taleban, appear to be a Taleban effort to downplay the significance of the deal, analysts said.

Radio Kabul echoed Mr. Muttaqi's claim that the Taleban were again fully in control of Kabul and its surroundings, saying that Mr. Masood's men had suffered serious casualties in their clashes with the religious militia.

Taleban fighters fired rockets Saturday at the village of Shakar Darra, once a stronghold of Mujahideen loyal to Mr. Masood, the formal Afghan defence minister.

The Taleban themselves were not clear if they were fighting Mr. Masood infiltrators from outside the area or pro-Masood supporters who were local residents. But they described one bound prisoner as a "Masood combat commander."

"We don't know how many of Masood's people are there but we expect to clear the area by tomorrow or the day after," the Taleban commander noted.

No cars, except Taleban jeeps, were headed north on the road on Saturday, but many civilians fled in buses or on foot south towards Kabul, where they were body-searched at a checkpoint before being allowed to proceed into the city.

Local villagers in the area, which is traditionally Mr. Masood's support base, have been rising up against their new rulers, launching attacks on them as ex-government commandos launch hit-and-run strikes on the area.

Arab economic GDP hits record in '95

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The economies of Arab countries grew by around five per cent in 1995 despite declines in the gross domestic product (GDP) of some oil producers, an official report showed Thursday.

The combined GDP of the 22-member Arab League peaked at \$528.5 billion in 1995 compared with \$503.3 billion in 1994, according to the League's Annual Economic Report, published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) semi-official daily Al Itihad.

Sources at the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), which oversees the publication of the report, confirmed the figures but said inflation rates were not calculated and a breakdown for members would be released later.

Previous AMF annual reports showed the Arab GDP hit a record high in 1994 despite a decline in oil prices and poor economic performance by Iraq and other members.

Al Itihad, quoting the

report which will be published in early 1997, attributed the five per cent growth in 1995 to an improvement in crude prices and economic reforms by several league members.

"Several Arab countries have pressed ahead with their economic restructuring programmes to redress fiscal imbalances, reduce the role of the public sector in the economy, encourage the private sector, spur growth, and tackle the budget deficit by cutting spend-

ing and boosting income," said the report, according to the newspaper.

It said improved oil prices and economic reforms slashed the combined Arab budget deficit by a third in 1995 while some members, such as Libya and Mauritania, managed to turn a shortfall into a surplus.

"Reforms have started to produce results in most members which are carrying economic restructuring programmes although they have remained slow. This is reflected in the good

growth rates over the past two years," said the AMF, the Arab League's main financial institution.

The price of OPEC's basket of seven crudes averaged around \$16.8 a barrel in 1995 compared with \$15.5 in 1994.

The increase pushed up the total Arab oil income to \$92.6 billion from nearly \$83 billion in 1994. The income is set to exceed \$100 billion in 1996 due to a further improvement in crude prices.

Oil income of GCC states set to hit 16-year high in '96

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The oil earnings of six Arab Gulf states are set to climb to their highest level in 16 years in 1996 because of a surge in crude prices after a sharp drop in world stockpiles, experts have said.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which control 45 per cent of the world's oil reserves, netted around \$74.5 billion in 1995, the highest level since the oil boom of the early 1980s, official figures showed.

The revenues are projected to exceed \$80 billion in 1996 as oil prices are forecast to remain above \$18 a barrel.

"Oil prices have remained above \$18 so far this year and will likely maintain that level until the end of the year," a Gulf oil analyst said.

"This price is one of the highest since the oil boom of the early 1980s. Since some GCC members have boosted their oil production, the total income of the six countries will likely be the highest in 16 years."

Oil prices remained as high as \$18.85 in the first half of 1996 despite an oil-for-food deal struck between the United Nations and Iraq allowing the embargo-hit Arab country to resume partial crude exports.

Under the May 20 agreement, Iraq is allowed to export around 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude to earn \$2 billion every six months to buy food and medicine for its people, who have

been under U.N. crippling sanctions since Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Independent experts had predicted prices would decline after the oil-for-food deal and plunge further once Iraq opens up its oil taps.

But their forecasts have so far failed to come true, with prices continuing their climb even though the date of the resumption of Iraqi oil exports draws closer.

According to OPEC's news agency OPECNA, the price of the group's basket of seven crudes stood at \$19.60 on Monday, one of the highest this year.

"The first and second quarters of this year witnessed positive aspects which helped support oil prices after they were expected to decline following the agreement between Iraq and the United Nations," the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) said.

"This included the decision by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to freeze the quotas of its members and the higher than expected demand for oil to make up for the fall in world stockpiles."

Within the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), oil stockpiles slumped to one of their lowest levels of around 1.04 billion barrels at the end of the first quarter because of large withdrawals by most members due to a prolonged winter.

China heralds private enterprise as saviour of state sector

BEIJING (AFP) — China has hailed its private sector as a saviour after it soaked up 1.5 million surplus workers from the crippled state sector in 1995.

"The private sector is creating jobs for laid-off employees of stagnant state-owned enterprises and is playing an active role in reforming the state sector," said Sang Lin, from the State Administration for Industry and Commerce.

In 1995 alone, the private sector hired 1.5 million state workers and since 1979 — when China's economic reforms started — it has taken on 56 million people or six per cent of the workforce.

"The private sector has skyrocketed to play an increasingly active role in the national economy," Mr. Sang enthused, according to The China Daily.

In urban areas, the private sector employed 19.6 million people or nearly 10 per cent of the workforce by the end of last year.

But the success of private enterprise pales into insignificance compared with the massive failures of China's state sector.

Although 1.5 million surplus workers found private sector jobs in 1995, the total number laid off was five times higher at 7.5 million, according to State Commission for Economic Restructuring.

State sector debts in 1995 totalled 3.36 trillion yuan (\$405 billion) and according to the State Statistics Bureau (SSB) this was 13 per cent

higher than the 2.97 trillion yuan held in private bank deposits.

To make matters worse, the total profits of the state sector in the first five months of 1996 were less than one per cent of China's industrial profits.

While the state sector made 300 million yuan in the period, profit from private and joint venture enterprises totalled 31.7 billion yuan, according to SSB figures.

According to the Xinhua news agency, China has slashed its ranks of government workers by 25 per cent since 1993 in a drive to improve efficiency and give greater play to free market forces.

Government departments at all levels had cut their staff by about two million workers since Beijing launched a restructuring programme in 1993, Xinhua quoted central government staff setup committee official Wang Qinfeng as saying.

"The restructuring is designed to separate the functions of the government from those of enterprises, solve the problems that stem from overstaffing and improve work efficiency," Xinhua quoted Mr. Wang as saying.

The number of departments under the State Council, or cabinet, had been reduced to 59 from 86 and the number of non-permanent offices had been slashed to 30 from 85, Mr. Wang said.

The overall number of

workers in State Council departments had dropped by more than 20 per cent, Mr. Wang said without giving further details.

"As part of a future restructuring, government bodies at all levels will transfer more of their decision-making authority to enterprises and intermediate agencies in a move to facilitate the establishment of a market economic structure," he said.

China's state firms, many of which are in the red, are subject to a knotty government bureaucracy and enjoy little or no control over their own affairs.

Beijing has said future economic growth will depend on reform of the lumbering state sector but has been reluctant to act for fear that high unemployment will cause social unrest.

Another report said that more than two million workers in China's industrial sector lost their jobs in the first half of 1996 as the result of streamlining and delays in construction and investment projects.

By the end of June, the country's total industrial workforce stood at 146.9 million, down 2.17 million from the end of 1995, the China Daily Business Weekly said.

State-owned enterprises accounted for 1.14 million layoffs, while collectively-owned businesses cut 802,000 workers.

"Such industrial sectors as manufacturing, mining and drilling, as well as construc-

Japanese fund flow into developing nations hits record high

TOKYO (AFP) — The net outflow of both official and private funds from Japan into developing countries in 1995 surged 53.2 per cent from the previous year to a record \$43.67 billion, the foreign ministry has said.

The outflow included official development assistance and other government funds as well as money coming from the private sector, the ministry said.

Official development assistance last year rose 9.3 per cent to \$14.73 billion while other official funds, including loans from the Export and Import Bank of Japan, jumped 74.3 per cent to \$5.75 billion.

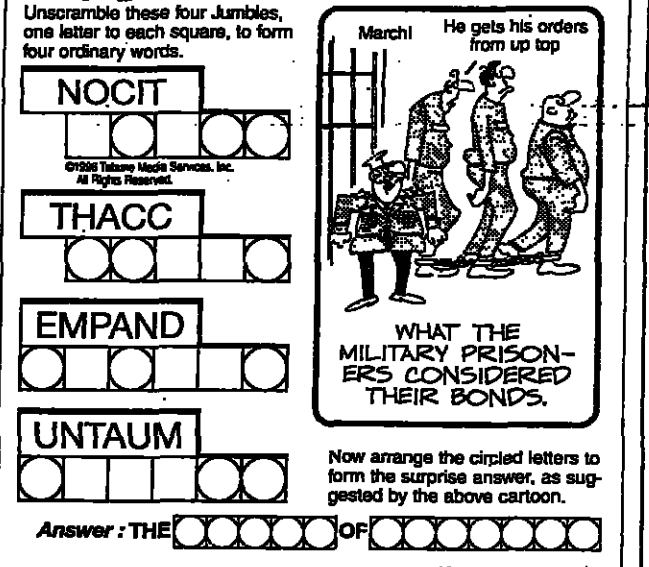
Investment by the private sector in developing countries soared 99.2 per cent to \$22.98 billion, supported by a surge in investment in Asian countries by Japanese manufacturers, the ministry said.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"My husband says love speaks louder than words. That means he wants me to stop talking during his TV show."

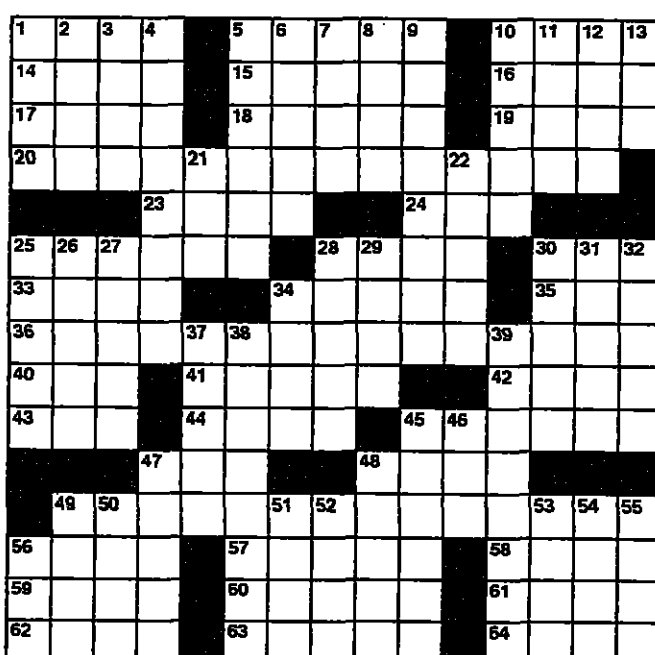
JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



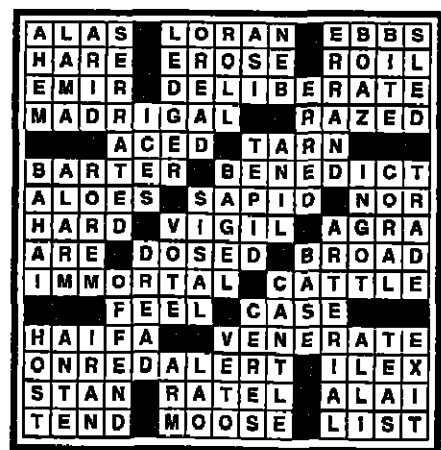
Yesterday's Jumbles: GOURD EXCEL CLUMSY EQUITY
Answer: Why they remained the best of friends — THEY "CLIQUE"

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Playground for Pierre
5 Planet
10 Map
14 Gen. Bradley
15 Metric measure
16 Soliloquy start
17 Marquand detective
18 Connection
19 Sere
20 Fighting a deadline
23 Irate
24 Itch
25 Soggy ground
28 Early train ride
30 — Lanka
33 Hebrew measure
34 Barbecue site, often
35 Newman flick
36 Houston hit
40 The — (Spanish hero)
41 Asian bear
42 McEntire of song
43 Fodder
44 — 500
45 — system
47 Plus
48 Vaep Al
49 Saroyan drama (with "The")
56 Corn
57 Powerful ray
58 Party to
59 Ink
60 — "my case!"
61 Collar
62 — "Three Lives"
63 Civil War side
64 Bubbly drink



by Alvin L. Becker



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- DOWN
1 Splendor
2 Cupid
3 Appraise
4 Kin of a traverse
5 Organic compounds
6 "There is — in the..."
7 Coral locale
8 Combo

- 9 English king
10 Besmirch
11 Glow or angle and
12 Rose's love
13 Four-poster
21 Distress signal
22 Mortise mate
25 Obtain by begging
26 — "vincit amor"
27 Thin in tone
28 — is dandy, but liquor... (Nash)
29 — boy!
30 Reared up, as a horse
31 Latin dance
32 Perfect
34 Hang fire
37 Make a guess
38 Uke's kin
39 Schwarzenegger hit
45 Out of the money

- 46 Goof
47 Change
48 "Whither thou..."
39 Work hard
50 "Picnic" playwright

- 51 Game of chance
52 Belgian river
53 — each life,
54 Nourishment
55 Italian province
56 Greek letter

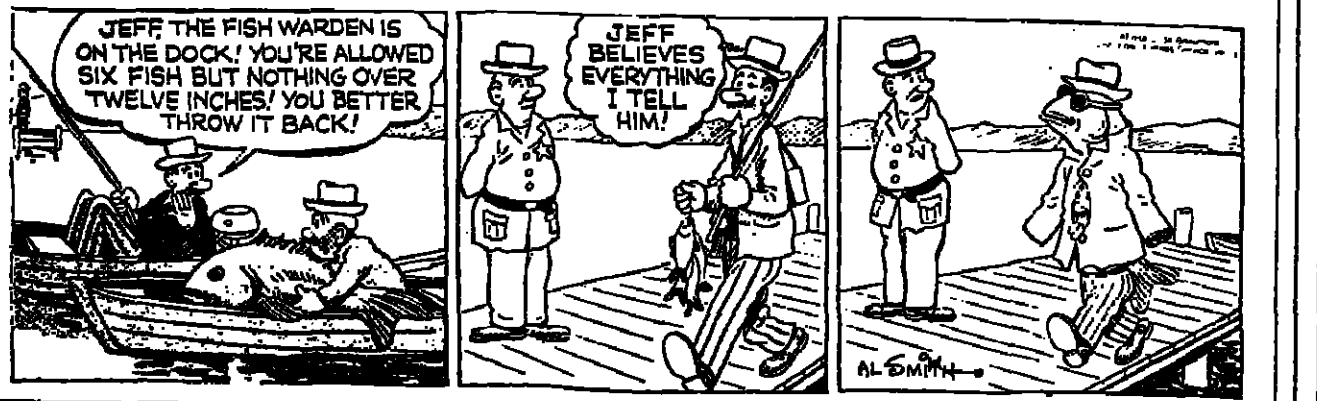
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Righter Foundation.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Analyse your progress towards your goals today and later tonight you can be quietly happy in the company of your loved ones. Spend time with the one who charms you and can make suggestions for your career activities.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Read literature today which can help you to be more dynamic and more successful in the days ahead. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friends and making the effort to have fun and relax to the week ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Look at your home today and see how to make it far more attractive, and comfortable. Later this evening enjoy quality time spent with your loved ones and make the effort to make your home a pleasant place.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) The evening is fine for amusements with close friend whom you have not seen for sometime and this will give you peace of mind. Be in the morning with loved ones and you will enjoy the time together.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Study your personal aims well today and make a plan to help you attain them. Understand the one you love and this will eliminate any difficulties which could be present later this evening and produce harmony.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get more attuned today to rightness and plan how to grow, and then confide this in a good friend who is willing to assist you in gaining your objective. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friends.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The morning today is the best time to handle some civic matter which appeals to you and thereby make your life more enjoyable. Get to be early and rest up for the coming week could be quite hectic for days ahead.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Plan how today to get into some new outlet which will be beneficial for the days ahead. Later tonight be with good friends for recreational activities while you all will enjoy and make your time together pleasant.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Study your home today and plan how to make it larger and more comfortable in case you have many invited guests. Check magazines, and brochures to get suggestions as to how you can make your plans a reality.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get in touch today with those who can assist you in realizing your dreams and gain the success which you desire. Be with good friends later this evening and you can have a pleasant time together, so plan for fun activities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Giving service to others today is wise and it will provide you with the peace of mind which is so important. The evening is best spent with an influential person you know and like so spend much time with this individual.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Show special attention to your mate today which will please him or her, then be off to profitable outlets which will gain you success. Later tonight you can meet with influential people and gain important career information.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline.

Software piracy widespread in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — At least 80 per cent of the software in Egypt is pirated, says an international software watchdog group which is offering hundreds of dollars in rewards to combat the problem here.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA), a lobbying, educational and enforcement group set up by the world's software giants, estimates that pirated software fills 80 per cent of a total market worth some \$100 million.

To fight back, the BSA is setting up a nationwide "hot line" and offering a 2,000 Egyptian pounds (\$680) reward for any information on companies

producing pirated software, the BSA Cairo representative, Sherine Al Rayess said.

Ms. Rayess and BSA European Vice President Martin Smith outlined the campaign during a news conference in Cairo last week.

"According to official statistics, piracy of software is estimated at 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the Egyptian market," Mr. Smith said.

"An independent study says it's over 90 per cent. If you compare with the United States and Australia where it is 35 per cent you get an idea of where Egypt stands," Mr.

Smith said.

Software piracy has also been widespread in China, where U.S. trade officials have frequently raised it as a stumbling block to trade agreements.

The Washington-based BSA was set up in 1988 by the world's key software producers, including International Business Machines Corp. (IBM), Microsoft Corp. and Novell.

The BSA lawyer in Egypt, Mohammad Al Berri, said that custom tariffs on software imports stood at 35 per cent on top of which a 10 per cent value added tax must be added.

This represents "one third of the sale price," Mr. Berri said.

He charged that piracy was preventing Egypt's software industry from flourishing and curbing its growth.

"Exports of Egyptian software stood at merely \$15 million in 1995 while Israel sold software worth \$240 million and India earned \$1 billion from its software exports," Mr. Berri said.

Meanwhile, Egyptian pirates appear to have excelled in their trade, the experts said.

"One out of five copies sold in Egypt is real," Ms. Rayess said.

Arab Gulf states readmitting foreign oil partners

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Gulf oil producers are poised to readmit foreign partners they ousted three decades ago to secure technology and funds for projects to boost their output capacity, an official report has said.

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which control more than 60 per cent of the world's proven crude reserves, need around \$160 billion to add nearly 15 million barrels per day (bpd) to their existing capacity, the Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee (ACIG) said.

Although oil is a sensitive sector in the Gulf countries, there are many reasons and indications which show it will not remain closed to private investment," said ACIG, an affiliate of the Cairo-based Arab League.

"The most important reason is the large funds needed for the projects to develop the production capacity to face world demand and boost market share," it added.

The study cited figures by the U.S. Department of Energy showing Arab states needed more than \$200 billion to raise capacity until the year 2010.

Around \$160 billion will have to be pumped by the five Gulf oil heavyweights to increase their combined capacity to between 30 million and 35 million bpd in 2010 from around 20 million bpd currently.

It said nearly \$54 billion were needed for exploration activities, drilling of new wells, building pipelines and developing infrastructure.

Most Gulf states have been engaged in plans to upgrade their oil output capacity to face demand. But such plans have been drawn up until 1985 or 2000 and they involved less than half the required investment needed beyond those years, according to oil executives in the region.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET
 ORGANIZED MARKET PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 12/10/1996

PRICE	12 MONTH	COMPANY NAME	P / K	DIV.	NO. OF	STOCKS	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
222.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.2	1.45	1	20	242.00	242.00	242.00	-
1.800	1.800	JORDAN POSTAL	10.8	3.00	1	10	10.80	10.80	10.80	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TELECOM	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CEMENT	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN STEEL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN GLASS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN PAPER	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TEXTILE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CHEMICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN FERTILIZER	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN MINING	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN AGRICULTURE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TOURISM	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TRADING	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SERVICES	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CONSTRUCTION	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TRANSPORT	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN MEDIA	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN EDUCATION	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN HEALTH	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN ENVIRONMENT	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SCIENCE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN ARTS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SPORTS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN RECREATION	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CULTURE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN HISTORY	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN GEOGRAPHY	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN POLITICS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN ECONOMY	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SOCIETY	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN LITERATURE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN MUSIC	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN DANCE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN THEATRE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN FILM	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TELEVISION	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN RADIO	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN PRESS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN PUBLICATIONS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN BOOKS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN MAGAZINES	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN JOURNALS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN NEWSPAPERS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN PERIODICALS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN REFERENCE	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN EDUCATIONAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN PROFESSIONAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN TECHNICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SCIENTIFIC	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN MEDICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN LEGAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN BUSINESS	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN FINANCIAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN ECONOMIC	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SOCIAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN POLITICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CULTURAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN HISTORICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN GEOGRAPHICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN POLITICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN ECONOMIC	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN SOCIAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN POLITICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN CULTURAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
1.200	1.200	JORDAN HISTORICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
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1.200	1.200	JORDAN HISTORICAL	12.0	2.00	1	10	12.00	12.00	12.00	-
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Sydney 2000 organisers opposed to increase in competitors

SYDNEY (AP) — The International Olympic Committee (IOC) wants more athletes than ever to attend the Sydney Games in 2000. The New South Wales government says it will not happen.

IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch said Friday that the number of athletes in Sydney could exceed the previously forecast figure of 10,000.

At the close of a three-day executive board meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, Samaranch said that two sports — taekwondo and triathlon — had been added for Sydney and that the IOC might increase the number of women's teams in field hockey and handball.

"Maybe we will need 400, 500 or 600 more," he said.

A spokesman for Michael Knight, the Olympics minister in the New South Wales state government, said Saturday that Sydney organizers have no intention of increasing the athlete numbers above 10,000.

"Our facilities plan to cater for 10,000 and that's the figure we are staying at," said Knight's spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Sydney organizers have

previously expressed concern about the size of the Olympics and have insisted they want to restrict the number of competitors to a maximum of 10,000. They say they cannot cater for more.

But Samaranch said the IOC's host city contract with Sydney stipulates the participation of "at least" 10,000 competitors.

There were 26 sports on the Atlanta program. The IOC must still decide whether beach volleyball and women's softball, which were introduced on a provisional basis in Atlanta, should be retained for Sydney.

Some officials have urged the IOC to eliminate sports to keep the Games from becoming unmanageable.

"I don't think so, but I am not dismissing this possibility," Samaranch said in Lausanne. "The policy to include new sports or events is sometimes very easy, but to delete some sports events is very, very difficult."

The IOC's program commission is studying the sports lineup for Sydney and is expected to make recommendations to the executive board meetings in Cancun, Mexico, next month.

Samaranch still lukewarm on Atlanta success

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — The president of the International Olympic Committee on Friday stood by his lukewarm verdict on the Atlanta Games: exceptional but not the greatest.

Juan Antonio Samaranch also disclosed that Atlanta organizers borrowed \$15 million from the IOC and repaid the loan before the Games. Despite speculation of a deficit, he said he expects the \$ 1.7 billion Games will break even.

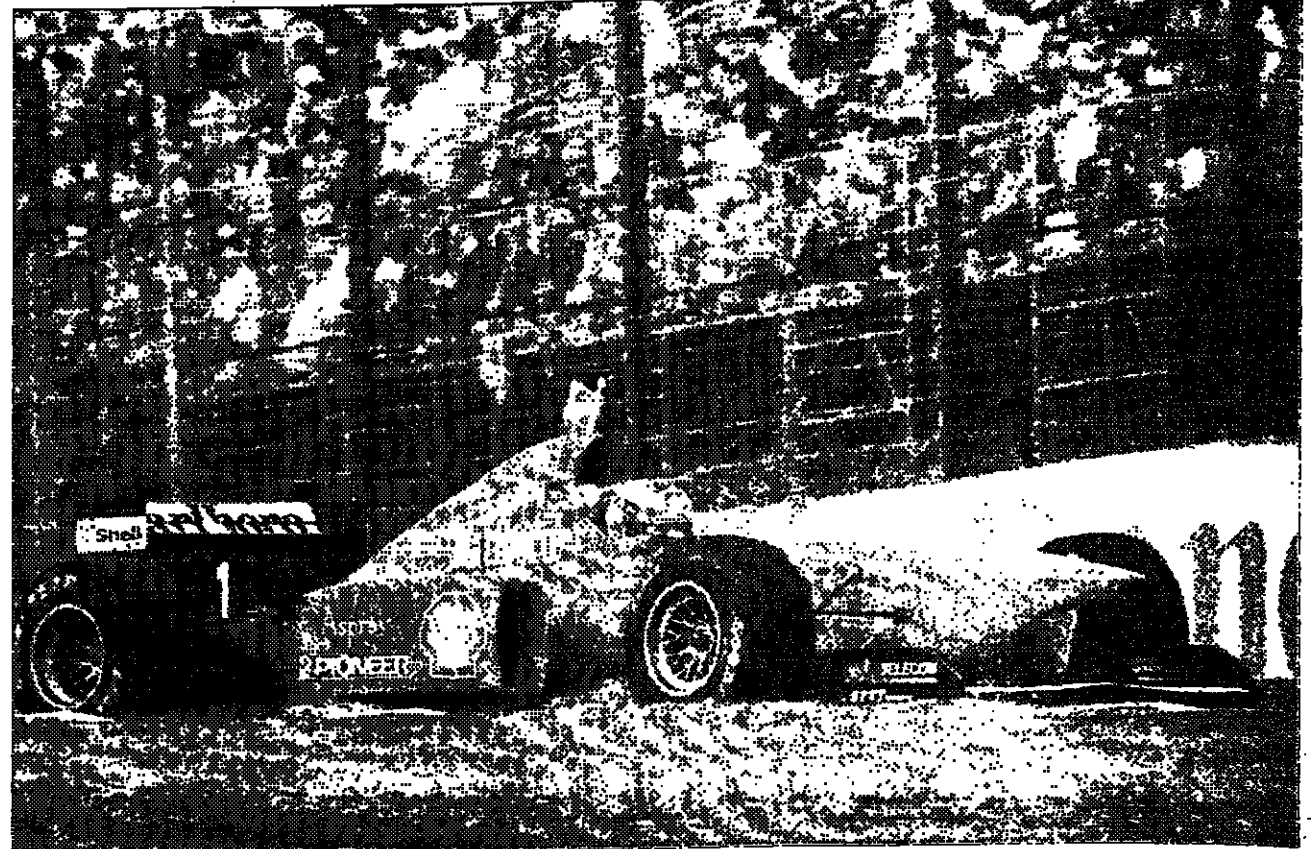
At the close of a three-day executive board meeting, Samaranch expressed the same guarded assessment that he delivered at Atlanta's closing ceremony, when he stopped short of bestowing his standard "best ever" accolade and called the Games "indeed most exceptional."

"I expressed the views of the IOC during the closing ceremony," he said. "They had been exceptional Games. We had some difficulties at the start with arrivals at the airport, communication, transport, information for the press. But bit by bit these problems were resolved. Sports competitions went exceptionally well and there were record numbers of spectators."

Asked whether criticism of the Games was justified, Samaranch said, "I was very clear. They had been excellent Games. We faced some problems but in general they were excellent Games."

Atlanta officials aren't disappointed with that assessment, said Bob Brennan, a spokesman for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, which did not send representatives to the IOC meeting.

"We've said all along, especially relating to the athletes and spectators, that they were excellent games," Brennan said Friday, adding that Samaranch had used "best ever" to describe only three Olympics: Seoul in 1988, Barcelona in 1992 and Lillehammer in 1994.



German Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher drives during qualifying for the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka October 12. Schumacher set the third fastest time in qualifying with a time of one minute 40.071 seconds (Reuters photo)

Villeneuve on pole for Japan Grand Prix

SUZUKA (R) — Canadian Jacques Villeneuve gave himself the best possible chance of upsetting the odds and winning the World Drivers' Championship on Saturday when he secured the pole position for Sunday's

Japanese Grand Prix. The 25-year-old son of the legendary Ferrari driver Gilles Villeneuve outpaced his world championship-leading Williams team-mate Briton Damon Hill by four-tenths of a second in the final minutes of a grip-

ping qualifying session. This meant that Villeneuve will have the prime position on the front row of the grid, with Hill alongside him, for a race he must win if he has to any chance of lifting the drivers' crown.

Hill needs only one point to clinch the title, but if he fails to score and Villeneuve wins, then the Canadian is champion. Villeneuve's pole was his third this year.

Yankees take Game 3 from Orioles

BALTIMORE (R) — Jimmy Key pitched a brilliant three-hitter and Cecil Fielder homered to cap a four-run rally with two out in the eighth inning as the New York Yankees beat the Baltimore Orioles 5-2 Friday to grab a two games to one lead in the American League championship series.

"I think we shocked the Orioles," said New York's rookie sensation Derek Jeter, who started the two-out rally with a double. "Today is a big, huge turnaround game."

Key turned in a masterful performance after a rocky start.

He gave up a first-inning, two-run homer to Todd Zeile — the second Baltimore batter — and little else in shutting down the powerful Orioles lineup.

"Todd hit a pitch that I didn't think was that bad of a pitch. He hit it out of the park," Key said of his one errant toss. "I've been pitching a long time, given up a lot of homers. You've just got to forget about it and move on."

And move on he did, putting away batter after batter. Key allowed just one hit and one walk after the first inning — no hits after the second — to improve to 4-1 in seven career postseason games.

New York's ace closer John Wetteland finished up with a perfect ninth for the save.

Key had been locked in a classic pitchers' duel with Baltimore starter Mike Mussina through the first seven innings.

Mussina had scattered four hits and allowed just one run over seven. But he ended up being charged with five runs and eight hits over 7 2/3 innings.

"A pitch here, a pitch there and it could have been completely different," lamented Mussina.



New York Yankees Bernie Williams (51) is met at the Yankee dugout by Derek Jeter and the rest of his teammates after he scored the game winning run in the eighth inning against the Baltimore Orioles in game three of the American League Championship Series. The Yankees went on to win the game 5-2 (Reuters photo)

The Yankees were trailing 2-1 in the eighth and down to their last four outs when Jeter ripped a double into the right field corner to get the big rally going.

Bernie Williams followed with a single to left that brought Jeter dashing home with the tying run. The Yankees had been a frustrated 2-for-27 in the series with runners in scoring position before Williams' single.

Mussina, who had been practically untouchable early, then surrendered a double to Tino Martinez that sent Williams sliding safely into third. That's when Zeile went from hero to goat. The Orioles third

baseman took the throw from left fielder B.J. Surhoff and appeared to try to fake a throw to second.

The ball slipped out of his hand, bouncing away, and Williams popped up and raced home with the go-ahead run.

All five of the Yankees post-season wins — three against Texas and two over Baltimore — have been come-from-behind victories.

Fielder followed the shocking miscue by Zeile with the fourth consecutive Yankee hit — a

towering two-run homer that put New York up 5-2 and sent Mussina to the showers.

The Yankees had barely scratched out a run in the fourth to close to 2-1 when Fielder grounded into a fielder's choice, just beating out a throw to first that enabled Williams to score. Williams had walked and advanced to third on a Martinez single to right.

"Key made it all possible," Yankees manager Joe Torre said of his team's latest late-inning victory.

"Jimmy Key has heart, stomach, these are things you don't see in stats," Torre said. "He kept us right there."

Juventus coach set to extend contract

TURIN (R) — Juventus coach Marcello Lippi, who steered the Turin team to European Cup victory last season, is set to stay at the Italian club after his current contract expires at the end of the season.

Umberto Agnelli, the club's honorary president, told reporters on Saturday that Juventus and Lippi had agreed that he would sign a new deal.

"We will fix the details after Wednesday," said Agnelli, without revealing any figures. Juventus play a European Cup Champions' League match against Rapid Vienna in Austria on Wednesday.

Lippi has been mentioned as a possible successor to beleaguered Italian national coach Arrigo Sacchi, whose position looks increasingly doomed after poor recent results.

An opinion poll for Rai Radio on Saturday showed that 54 per cent of Italians wanted Sacchi out. Some 23 per cent had no preference and the remainder were pro-Sacchi.

Under-21 coach Cesare Maldini was the top choice as a replacement, followed by Lazio president Dino Zoff, Lippi, Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello and Bayern Munich's Giovanni Trapattoni.

However both Agnelli and Lippi appeared to dampen any speculation linking the Juventus coach with Italy.

"The national team can have no bearing on the negotiations between Juventus and Lippi," said Agnelli.

Lippi said he believed the ideal position was to renew a contract from year to year

"because if you win you have more power over your contract and if you don't get the results it is not right to stay on under a cloud."

"But the case of a great club like Juventus is a little different," he added, hinting at a long-term renewal.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Giggs signs for 5 years

Manchester (R) — Ryan Giggs signed a new five-year contract with Manchester United on Saturday. He became the seventh player to commit himself to United's long-term future. Others staying until 2001 are: Peter Schmeichel, David Beckham, Gary and Phil Neville, Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes.

Indonesia to host SEA Games

JAKARTA (AP) — The 19th Southeast Asian Games will be held in Indonesia next October with competition in 34 sports, an official said Friday. Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma and Laos have agreed to compete Oct. 10 to 19, said Rio Tambunan of the National Sports Council. Indonesia was picked after Vietnam, the original choice as host of the region's biggest sporting event, said it couldn't handle the job.

Rusedski, Damm in Beijing final

BEIJING (AFP) — Unseeded Briton Greg Rusedski ousted fourth seed Byron Black of Zimbabwe Saturday to win a place against Czech Martin Damm in the final of the \$328,000 Beijing Open. Rusedski, ranked 84th in the world, controlled the semi-final match to defeat world No. 47 Black 6-2 6-2 in 54 minutes. "It was pretty routine today. I didn't take advantage of a few opportunities I had earlier," Rusedski said after the match. "Mentally I was a bit flat but I felt that if I started getting aggressive things would go my way." Damm continued his winning ways with a 7-6 (7-5), 3-6, 6-3 victory over Thomas Johansson of Sweden, ranked 93rd in the world. World-ranked No. 72 Damm hit 17 aces to Johansson's 12 in the one-hour 57-minute match.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHCH ©1997 Tribune Media Services, Inc.			
WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ			
Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:	46	QK1084	AK93 4AK8
AK7 754	Q984	AK742	
The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST			
10	10	10	10
What do you bid now?	Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:	AK1076	Q7 10863 4876
AK1092	QK87	64	AKJ75
The bidding has proceeded: NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST			
10	10	10	10
What action do you take?	Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:	AAK1083	795 10976 485
Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	AK1083	795	10976 485
AVoid QKJ974	QJ863	AK99	
The bidding has proceeded: NORTH WEST SOUTH EAST			
10	10	10	10
What action do you take?	Look for answers on Monday.		
Q. 4 - Both vulnerable as South			

Asprilla set for showdown with Newcastle boss

LONDON (R) — Faustino Asprilla was due to arrive back in Britain on Saturday and will be heading for showdown talks with his Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan.

The Colombian was reported to be booked on a London-bound flight from Bogota.

Keegan, preparing his team for their English Premier League game at Derby, wants to know why his 7.5 million pounds (\$11.81million) player is two days late.

Asprilla scored Colombia's winner in their World Cup game against Ecuador on Wednesday and was expected to return to London immediately after the game.

Bad weather delayed the scheduled flight but he was not on the next available plane.

Keegan said on Friday that he did not know of Asprilla's whereabouts and ruled him out of the derby game.

Now Keegan must consider whether to include him in the Newcastle squad which leaves for Hungary on Monday for the UEFA Cup game against Ferencvaros on Tuesday.

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WATERWORLD

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PLAZA

The Arab Cinema Surprise
Ahmad Zaki ...in
NASER 56

(Arabic)

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:45, 11:00

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

FRENCH KISS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2"

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

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Euro 96 made nearly \$109 million profit

LONDON (R) — The Euro 96 soccer championship hosted by England in June this year made a profit of 69 million pounds (\$108.7 million), the English Football Association (F.A.) said on Friday.

Around two thirds of the money will go to the 16 teams that took part in the three-week tournament, with winners Germany pocketing 6.0 million pounds (\$9.5 million).

The remaining third, around 22 million pounds (\$34.6 million), will be ploughed into a special fund created by UEFA, European soccer's governing body, dedi-

cated to the development of football in the emerging nations of eastern Europe.

The announcement caps what was generally regarded as a successful tournament for the hosts both on and off the field, and will boost England's hopes of staging the 2006 World Cup.

"When it comes to bidding for the World Cup there can be no better example to point to," F.A. Spokesman Steve Double said.

"We have proved we can organise a tournament that was a huge success in terms of crowds, atmosphere and the financial side as well."

Sanchez, Martinez knocked out

FILDERSTADT (Reuter) — Arantxa Sanchez Vicario led the exodus as the top three seeds crashed out of the quarter-finals of the \$450,000 Filderstadt tournament on Friday.

Sanchez, knocked out of the Leipzig tournament a week ago by unseeded Czech Helena Sukova, succumbed 6-1 6-4 in just over an hour to the 16-year-old Swiss teenager Martina Hingis, seeded eighth.

Sanchez's compatriot and number two seed Conchita Martinez fared no better, going down 6-1, 6-3 to fifth seed 21-year-old German Anke Huber, who won the Leipzig tournament.

Unseeded Austrian Judith Wiesner caused the third upset of the day, beating Croat Iva Majoli 6-4 7-5, while American fourth



Conchita Martinez

seed Lindsay Davenport overcame sixth seed Czech Jana Novotna 6-3 6-4. In the semifinals, Hingis

meets Davenport while Wiesner faces Huber, who triumphed here in 1991 and 1994.

Switzerland wins 1st road race title in 45 years

LUGANO, Switzerland (R) — Barbara Heeb gave Switzerland their first victory in the women's world road race championship Saturday, and their first world road race title for 45 years.

She shook off her Lithuanian rival Rasa Polikeviciute on the final climb of the Crespiera mountain after dominating the 100.8-km race.

Her solo ride over the final five kms put her 16 seconds clear of Polikeviciute at the finish with Canadian Linda Jackson taking the bronze, 36 seconds later.

Switzerland's last world road title came in 1951 when Ferdi Kuebler won the professional event at Varese, Italy.

Heeb's powerful riding ended the hopes of Frenchwoman Jeannie Longo, the Olympic road race champion, who was seeking her 12th world crown.

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Ivanisevic, Kafelnikov eliminated

VIENNA (R) — American Todd Martin ended Goran Ivanisevic's hopes at the \$800,000 CA Trophy on Friday when he beat the second-seeded Croatian 4-6 6-3 6-3.

In the semifinals, Martin will meet fifth-seeded Boris Becker, who despite a recurring wrist injury knocked out Switzerland's Marc Rosset 7-6 7-5.

Saturday's other semifinal on the indoor hardcourt will be contested by Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch and Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands.

Boetsch caused the day's other upset, beating third-seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov 7-6 7-6 to deny the Russian a chance of claiming his fifth title of the year.

Siemerink eliminated sentimental favourite Stefan Edberg 5-7 7-5 7-6 to deny the 30-year-old Swede a chance of winning one more title before his retirement at the end of the year.

Seventh-seeded Martin dropped serve at 3-4 to lose the first set 4-6, before stepping up a gear and hammering down the aces to claim the second and third sets with a break for 5-3 and 3-2.

Martin is aiming for his second title of the year, although he also reached the final at Memphis and semifinals at Wimbledon, Indianapolis and Toronto.

Edberg was weakened by a bout of flu which forced him to pull out of Lyon and started showing signs of fatigue after taking the first set.

Edberg, who will contest tournaments at Stuttgart, Paris and Stockholm before his retirement as well playing in the Davis Cup final, said: "It was a real pity that I lost today."

"This would have been a good opportunity to go for a last title before I quit. It was a close match today and I could have won."

Becker, who was forced to take a longer break than expected following a wrist injury sustained at Wimbledon, was pleased with his showing against Rosset.

"I'm happy because this is the first time in four months I've played three matches in a row," said the three-times Wimbledon champion, who lost in the first round in Bucharest, the second in Basle and pulled out of Lyon.



Manchester United striker Eric Cantona (R) is tackled by Liverpool defender Phil Babb (L) October 12. Manchester United won the match 1-0 with a goal from David Beckham in front of a sellout crowd at Old Trafford (Reuters photo)

Hero Beckham torpedoes Liverpool

LONDON (AFP) — A goal from England new boy David Beckham shattered Liverpool's unbeaten start to the season and helped Manchester United close the gap at the top of the Premiership at Old Trafford on Saturday.

But Liverpool manager Roy Evans refused to be downhearted.

"We don't go away with our heads down. We know if we continue to play like that, we will have a great chance to succeed," said Evans.

Instead Evans was convinced the match had been theirs for the taking.

"Count the chances. We had six or seven good chances, not half-chances, and if that's not penetration, I don't know what is."

"You don't expect to come here and have it all your own way, but for an hour that's what we had. I don't think anyone would argue that we dominated."

"The only problem we

found was with ourselves not putting the ball in the back of the net — and the goal we gave away, which was a bit sloppy," he said.

Part of the reason was some great goalkeeping from man-of-the-match Peter Schmeichel.

"We are still early days, but if Liverpool had won today they would have gone seven points clear. Even considering the time of year seven points is a lot to give Liverpool," said Schmeichel.

"Bearing in mind most of our team have been on international duty I am not really that surprised we were forced to defend so much."

"It is very important that we have come out of this game unbeaten and Liverpool have lost a game — that means a lot," he added.

United received a boost before the match with the news that wing wizard Ryan Giggs became the seventh player within

weeks to commit himself to Old Trafford beyond the millennium with a new five-year contract.

But that was overshadowed by his absence, along with Gary

Pallister, from Ferguson's starting line-up. Fortunately Norwegian defender Ronny Johnsen was fit to return alongside David May while Jordi Cruyff filled in for Giggs.

Beckman's 22nd-minute goal won nothing but praise from United manager Alex Ferguson.

"It was a great goal, but the boy's got that ability," said Ferguson. "(Ole) Sol-skjaer made it out of nothing, he teed it up well for him and in those situations you expect Beckham to hit the target at least, which he invariably does."

Pallister was ruled out after suffering a back spasm on Friday, a recurrence of an old problem, which Ferguson put down to England's failure to give him a warm-up before he came on against Poland last week.

"He said Southgate got injured quickly and he just went straight on. But you can't do that and he suffered for that."

"We left him out because next Wednesday is the most important game for us in the big picture. Today was important, but not as much as Fenerbahce — you can always catch up in the league."

وزارة الاشغال العامة والاسكان
دائرة العطاءات الحكومية
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

INVITATION

Prequalification for Contractors
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Systems in the Greater Irbid Area
Wadi Hassan Wastewater Treatment Plant
Contract No. (175/96)

- The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing/Government Tenders Directorate, invites experienced international Contractors, who have implemented several wastewater treatment plants of similar size in the last 10 years and local contractors who have been pre-qualified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as First Grade in the field of Treatment Plants or joint venture of First Grade in following fields Water and Sewerage, Electro-Mechanical and Buildings to participate in the Pre-qualification for the construction of the Wadi Hassan Wastewater Treatment Plant. For the foreign contractors a pre-qualification procedure will take place according to the Qualification Questionnaire. Foreign Contractors are strongly encouraged to joint venture or associate with local contractors.
- The project is partially financed by the Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW) the project consists of the construction of a Wastewater Treatment Plant (designed capacity population of 22,000 daily flow Qd=1600 m3/d. Extended Aeration system followed by Polishing Ponds), a Pumping Station (designed capacity 400 m3/h) and sewer force main (approximately 4.5 km) including all civil, mechanical and electrical works.
- Qualification Questionnaires are available from the Government Tenders Directorate at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Amman P.O. Box 1220, Tel (+962 606 757, Fax (+962 606 751.
- The last date for the request of the Qualification Questionnaire is the 20th of October, 1996.
- Qualification Documents are due not later than 1200 hours, Jordan local time, on the 23rd November, 1996, to the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.
- Qualification document will be publicly opened at 1400 hours, Jordan local time on the 23rd November, 1996, in the office of the Government Tenders Directorate.

Chairman of the Central Committee
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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

(MODIFICATION NO. 1)

Central Tender No. 154/96

Inspection and Repair of berths at Aqaba port

- Bids are to be submitted to G.T.D not later than 1300 hours local time on 27th October, 1996.
- This modification shall be part of the tender documents.

Chairman of the
Central Committee
Director General
Eng. Naser Madadha

هكذا من الاصل



An angry Muslim woman gestures at Russian soldiers patrolling the village of Jusici on Saturday as a part of NATO-led peace implementation forces. Tension rose in the sensitive northern Bosnian village where Serb police arrested three Muslim villagers and used automatic weapons to threaten a United States peace-keeping officer on Friday (Reuters photo)

Bosnian election seen at 'risk'

SARAJEVO (R) — Security fears in Bosnia mean plans to hold municipal elections next month are "substantially at risk", the international body supervising post-war polls in the former Yugoslav republic said on Saturday.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), facing threats from the Bosnian Serbs to pull out of the municipal elections set for Nov. 23 and 24, issued an urgent appeal, saying: "All sides must cool it."

OSCE spokesman David Foley said decisions on whether to proceed, with the polls rapidly approaching, must be taken immediately. "The time is now," he told a news conference.

Postponement of the municipal elections, which follow Sept. 14 elections for a presidency and parliament, would be a major blow to the Bosnian peace process and to the prestige of the international community.

The OSCE mission head in Bosnia, Robert Frowick of the United States, has been holding urgent talks with the Bosnian Serb leadership to try to persuade them to take a full part in the electoral process.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum was on Friday having last-ditch talks with Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic.

Mr. Plavsic said earlier this week that the Serbs might hold their own local elec-

tions without OSCE supervision.

Then on Friday she said a security crisis surrounding the resettlement of Muslims in Serb areas made it "almost impossible" for the Serbs to participate in the elections.

The resettlement of Muslim villagers in Serb areas of northern Bosnia has stoked up tension, with Serbs arresting Muslims for possession of arms and Muslims accusing Serbs of blowing up houses they want to occupy.

Mr. Foley called for an end to "gamesmanship and brinkmanship", saying the elections were a crucial part of the Bosnian peace process. "There are signifi-

cant fears that if the current security situation were to continue from now to the municipal elections, they would be put substantially at risk," he said, adding: "Decisions must be made immediately."

Putting off the elections would pose a major security headache. NATO is set to begin a rapid withdrawal of its 58,000 peacekeepers after the November polling date, with the drawdown expected to be complete in January.

The international community has been putting intense pressure on the Bosnian Serbs to fall into line and participate in the elections, threatening to exclude them from financial aid for post-war reconstruction.

Masood's forces stage rear attack on Taleban, pound Bagram airbase

KABUL (Agencies) — Ousted Afghan military chief Ahmad Shah Masood sent his fighters into action against the Taleban militia in a town behind the front lines on Saturday, putting scores of black-turbaned warriors to flight.

Masood forces also fired an estimated 300 shells and mortar bombs into Kabul's main airbase of Bagram 50 kilometres north of the capital overnight and the Taleban responded with bombing raids by two MiG-21s, witnesses said.

It was not clear what damage was done by the MiGs or in the overnight shelling.

On Saturday, Mr. Masood struck Charikar, a mainly Tajik town a 30-minute drive from the Taleban front-line headquarters at Jabal Os Siraj at the mouth of the Salang Pass through the Hindu Kush mountains which divide Afghanistan.

Taleban guards refused to talk about fighting that appeared to be going on in Charikar, ordering journalists to leave.

Journalists saw a convoy

of Taleban trucks and pickups, along with a mobile rocket launcher truck, drive round a Taleban roadblock and speed off towards Kabul.

On Friday, the Taleban faced its worst day of setbacks as fighters loyal to Mr. Masood, military chief in the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, launched guerrilla attacks on supply lines north of Kabul, witnesses said.

Acting Taleban Information Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi told Reuters his forces had suppressed insurgents and still held all towns on the plains north of the capital, including Bagram airbase, as well as the main highway.

"We are of the belief that with the aid of God no force can stop us in carrying out this work," he said.

"Our operation in the north of Kabul is against bandits and those forces which destroyed Afghanistan, looted the treasury and defamed jihad (holy war) and Islam."

On Friday local commanders spurred on by Mr. Masood cut a vital highway running from Kabul to the Taleban's northern frontline against Mr. Masood and militia chief Abdul Rashid Dostum, employing hit-and-run tactics the Taleban have not faced before.

The Taleban roundly dismissed the threat posed by a military alliance between the government it ousted from here two weeks ago and their main northern rival, General Dostum.

Mr. Muttaqi said the Taleban were unconcerned with a deal signed Thursday between Mr. Masood, Gen. Dostum and Shiite Muslim leader Karim Khalili.

"We do not have any problem with Dostum right now," Mr. Muttaqi told AFP. "We believe the forces in the north will not cause any problem for the Taleban and that we will solve our differences peacefully."

Mr. Muttaqi also warned that the Taleban would not

(Continued on page 7)

Battles rage in Mogadishu; 10 killed

MOGADISHU (R) — At least 10 people were killed and nine wounded in a string of attacks and clashes in the Somali capital on Friday and early on Saturday, witnesses said.

An upsurge in violence had been widely expected in Mogadishu as rival factions jostle for power during Kenyan-sponsored Somali peace talks in Nairobi.

Witnesses said six people were killed and four wounded when a mortar bomb slammed into a vehicle on Friday carrying passengers in Medina district, which is blockaded by Hussein Aided's forces.

One person was killed and two were wounded when a landmine exploded in a house on the frontline dividing militiamen loyal to Medina faction

leader Musa Sudi Yalahow and others loyal to Mr. Aided.

Another person was killed and two were wounded in a clash on the green line battle zone dividing south and north Mogadishu between Mr. Aided fighters and forces loyal to Ali Mahdi Muhammad.

Early on Saturday, two supporters of faction leader Ali Hassan Osman Ato were gunned down and killed in south Mogadishu by unidentified gunmen, who also wounded one other person.

Residents said all factions were plainly on high alert with "technicals," four-wheel-drive battlewagons bristling with weapons and gunmen, prowling the streets every night.

Most faction leaders including Mr. Aided, Mr. Ali Mahdi and Mr. Ato arrived in

Nairobi the weekend for exploratory peace talks sponsored by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi.

They are the first inter-factional talks involving Mr. Aided, a 34-year-old former U.S. Marine who took over from his father Mohammad Farah Aided after his death in Mogadishu on Aug. 1.

Mr. Aided, like his father, was elected president of Somalia by supporters and heads a government. But it has not received much international recognition and is rejected by Mr. Ali Mahdi and other leaders.

South Mogadishu has been hit in the past several weeks by a series of assassinations which Somali experts say are part of a vendetta between groups to avenge Mohammad Farah Aided's death.

Kurdish factions put out conflicting assertions

ANKARA (Agencies) — An Iraqi Kurdish group that lost several areas in northern Iraq to its rival last month said on Saturday it had regained some towns after a fresh attack.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani, said in a statement that its forces killed more than 73 members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Massoud Barzani, who last month took control of the whole region with backing from Baghdad.

There was no immediate independent confirmation.

The PUK said that on Friday it "liberated" nine towns in the Sulaimaniyah province in northern Iraq. The city of Sulaimaniyah had been the PUK's stronghold until the fighting that broke out on Aug. 31 and forced PUK forces to retreat to areas along the Iranian border.

The KDP was driven out of the towns and districts of Penjwin, Nalparez, Koghlan, Kuni Manga and Bashmakh. Mawat, Chwarta, Kanarwe and Qala Cholan around Sulaimaniyah, one of the main cities in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, the PUK statement said.

The strategic Mount Daban and areas of Qamchogha and Sordash plains west of Sulaimaniyah were also recaptured, the PUK said.

However, the PUK says it still has pockets of resistance, particularly along Iraq's rugged northeastern border with Iran.

The KDP and PUK jointly administered northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad after the 1991 Gulf war, but fell out over power-sharing and tax revenue in May 1994.

Israel shells S. Lebanon village despite truce deal

NABATIYEH, Lebanon (R) — Israeli gunners shelled a South Lebanese village on Friday night, wounding 10 civilians in an escalation of its conflict with pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas, Lebanese security sources said.

Israel said the shelling was a direct reprisal for an attack by the guerrillas on its forces, although no one was hurt in the attack.

However, its action bypassed a monitoring mechanism set up last April under U.S. and French auspices which is designed to avert escalation of the conflict in South Lebanon and bans attacks from or at civilian areas.

Eight of the injured were from a single family and some were badly hurt when heavy artillery shells hit the village of Safad Al Batikh, the Lebanese sources said. One man had a hand blown off and another lost a foot, they said.

Three houses were destroyed by direct hits and

37 other shells exploded close to the village, the sources added.

The attack was the most intensive shelling of a Lebanese village by Israel since a U.S.-brokered ceasefire understanding on April 26 ended a 17-day Israeli blitz of Lebanon intended to crush Hizbollah guerrillas.

The understanding included an undertaking by Israel and its South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia ally not to shell Lebanese civilians, stating that: "Israel and those cooperating with it will not fire any kind of weapon at civilians or civilian targets in Lebanon."

It said the two sides were committed to ensuring that "under no circumstances will civilians be the target of attack" nor would civilian areas be the launching ground for attacks.

However, the accord permitted Hizbollah the right to attack Israeli troops in the occupation zone and allowed Israel the right to self-defence.

Agency calls for aid for Sudan famine victims

ONAIROBI (R) — The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said on Saturday it was trying to help end a famine threatening 240,000 people in northeastern Sudan.

The IFRC said following an assessment mission to the Red Sea hills of northeastern Sudan it was preparing an appeal to assist 158,000 of the Beja people through rations of oil, pulses and cereals.

It said in a statement famine was affecting an estimated 240,000 of the 316,000 Beja people in the Red Sea hills because of two years of crop failure and little rainfall in the region.

It said the most vulnerable were migrating from remote rural areas to live in makeshift shelters on the outskirts of towns.

The Beja people relied on

livestock for survival but grain costs had skyrocketed while animal prices plunged, it added.

Rebels support peace bid

Sudan's southern rebel factions are all in favour of reaching a negotiated peace agreement with the government, including the key rebel group led by Colonel John Garang, a senior official said Saturday.

"This desire was expressed at informal negotiations in Nairobi last week between the rebel groups and a delegation representing the four states of Bahr Al Ghazal of south Sudan," Health Minister Achuel Nigor Majok said.

Mr. Majok, quoted by the Alwan daily, represented Warab state in the negotiations.

Erbakan may face prosecution over alleged Libya funds

ANKARA (AP) — Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, under fire for a controversial trip to Tripoli, faces investigation for alleged financial assistance from Libya, news reports said.

The daily Hurriyet on Saturday quoted Prosecutor Haluk Yardimci as saying an investigation would be carried out into allegations that Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party received \$500,000 in assistance from Libya just before elections held in 1989.

Turkish law forbids foreign financial assistance to political parties. The party could be ordered closed if the allegations are proven.

Mr. Erbakan and the Welfare Party have denied the claims.

The prime minister caused outrage among secular-minded Turks by visiting Libya earlier this week and for not reacting strongly to the Libyan leader.

Muammar Qadhafi, who during a joint news conference urged the creation of an independent Kurdish state.

Opposition leaders have called for a vote of no-confidence against Mr. Erbakan and his government.

Kurdish independence is a sensitive issue for Turkey, which has been battling Kurdish rebels in the southeast since 1984. The conflict has killed more than 20,000 people.

The United States also criticised Mr. Erbakan for visiting Libya and signing a deal to triple trade with the country, which Washington brands a terrorist state.

Clinton, if reelected, seen as more sympathetic to Arabs

By Saad Silawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian and Arab politicians on Saturday agreed that a U.S. administration led by incumbent President Bill Clinton would be more sympathetic to Arab causes than one led by his rival, Republican nominee Bob Dole.

In interviews with the Al Ra'i Arabic daily, former Prime Minister Taher Masri, former Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and the Saudi ambassador to Jordan, Sheikh Abdullah Sudeiri, said they thought that a second term would free Mr. Clinton from pressure normally exerted on American presidents by the powerful Jewish lobby in the U.S.

The three, however, differed on their perception of how Mr. Clinton would deal with Iraq.

Mr. Masri said that being elected for a second and last term, Mr. Clinton would be more sympathetic with Arab causes and concerns.

Mr. Masri said Arabs had focussed their attention on elections in the powerful countries of the world to judge whether the outcome would help them in their quest to solve the Palestinian problem.

"But history has proved that what dictates the policies of these countries are their interests and that only a real steadfastness and solidarity among the Arabs would determine the other countries' stands vis-a-vis the Arab World," Mr. Masri said.

He said Mr. Clinton's policies

Palestinians were "much more sympathetic than Mr. Dole's, who is biased in favour of Israel."

Mr. Masri noted President Clinton was a witness to the Oslo accords and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and to the developments in the peace process. He is in a better position to deal with the issues of peace in the region in a manner that better serves the American interests in the region," said Mr. Masri.

Mr. Sudeiri agreed to a great extent with Mr. Masri but added that "any American policy is affected by Arab positions. Therefore, the Arabs themselves must not wait to see what will happen, but rather unify their ranks in order to determine their future."

He added: "Arabs should not simply react to U.S. actions. They should initiate a dialogue with the Americans regardless of the outcome of the elections."

"If Arabs unify their positions and policies, they will affect the American policies towards their causes and the Middle East," Mr. Sudeiri said.

He said he thought that any American president who won a second term would be freer to take decisions without considering his political future.

"It is not in the interest of the U.S. to witness any kind of violence or unrest in the region but would want to see peace take hold for the interest of all the parties."

Mr. Dole's statements in favour of Israel, Mr. Sudeiri said, were mere campaign slogans.

Former Foreign Minister Abu Jaber did not expect a

big difference between the stands of the two contenders for the U.S. elections, but said Mr. Clinton would, if elected, be freed from the pressures exercised by the Jewish lobby in the U.S.

Dr. Abu Jaber said that Mr. Clinton was committed to the peace process and the Arab-Israeli negotiations as evidenced by his statements and the statements of his Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Dr. Abu Jaber said he thought that the participation of U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross in the Beirut Hanoun negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians last week as of great significance as it showed U.S. commitment to the peace process.

In the past the American coordinator was not allowed to attend the negotiations.

On Iraq, the Saudi ambassador did not expect any change regardless of who wins the next elections.

Whether Mr. Clinton or Mr. Dole is president, the pressure on Iraq will continue, he said.

"As long as the Iraqi regime does not implement the U.N. Security Council's resolutions, the American policy towards that country will stay the same," he said.

Mr. Masri added: "Both (Clinton and Dole) will have similar belligerent stands towards Iraq."

Dr. Abu Jaber predicted, however, a breakthrough in American-Iraqi relations if President Clinton was

Church contemplating canonising last czar

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian Orthodox Church is considering whether to canonise Czar Nicholas II, the last czar who was murdered with his family by the Bolsheviks. ITAR-TASS news agency reported Friday. A special church commission said in a report that, although episodes of the czar's life were far from saintly, at the end of his life his behaviour and that of his family had become worthy of a prospective saint. An Orthodox priest quoted by Interfax said that as prisoners in Siberia, the deposed czar and his family "set an example of Christian virtue: Humility and repentance." The Orthodox religious authorities have warned that an eventual canonisation of Nicholas II should not be interpreted as reflecting "Orthodox Church support for such and such a political party, including the monarchist parties." A final decision on the canonisation will be taken at the next Orthodox Council in Moscow in 2000.

Russian MPs want Brezhnev plaque returned

MOSCOW (AFP) — A group of Russian deputies have called for a plaque honouring ex-Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to be returned to its former place at the entrance to a Moscow apartment block where he used to live. ITAR-TASS news agency reported Saturday. The deputies said Brezhnev, who ruled the Soviet Union for 16 years until his death in 1982, was "a politician and statesman of the greatest importance in Russia's history." The deputies, from the lower house's Geopolitical Commission, which is dominated by ultra-nationalists, urged Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov to return the plaque to the building in time for the 90th birthday anniversary of the late leader on Dec. 19. The Brezhnev era was marked by a crackdown on political dissent and a tougher stance toward the West, although many Russians now facing economic hardship look back on it as a period of relative prosperity.

Cuba to hold symposium on Beatles

HAVANA (R) — Cuba's Writers' and Artists' Guild said Friday it will hold a three-day celebration next week of the Beatles, whose music was banned by the Communist government through the mid-1970s. The commemoration of the British rock superstars that begins next Tuesday will include a two-session symposium at which original papers on the Beatles will be presented. Their music will also be performed by Cuban musicians, and films will be screened. Several musicians and writers who attended a news conference announcing the celebration said they defied the government's official ban on the Beatles by listening to radio broadcasts from Florida in the 1960s. Fidel Castro's government had viewed counter-culture as diametrically opposed to the revolutionary ethic of work and sacrifice. At the time, the Cuban Ministry of Education also banned male students from having long hair and female students from wearing mini-skirts. By the mid-1970s the Beatles could be heard frequently on Cuban radio and in 1985 the Beatle's film, A Hard Days Night, was aired on Cuban TV. Since then Cuban television viewers have had the opportunity of watching numerous documentaries on the Beatles.